

*Wm. Lloyd Garrison* 1118. h. 5.  
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CONSIDERATIONS  
ON THE  
ABOLITION OF SLAVERY  
AND THE  
SLAVE TRADE,  
UPON  
GROUNDS OF NATURAL, RELIGIOUS,  
AND  
POLITICAL DUTY.

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Utilitatis specie in republica sepiissime peccatur. — Nihil,  
quod crudele, utile: est enim naturæ hominum, quam sequi  
debemus, maxime inimica crudelitas.

CICERO de Off. III. 17.

Sic enim cogitans, est istud quidem bonestum, verum hoc expedit,  
res a natura copulatas audebit errore divellere; qui fons  
est fraudium, maleficiorum, scelerum omnium.

CICERO de Off. III. 18.

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MDCCLXXXIX.

CONSIDERATIONS  
ON THE  
ABOLITION OF SLAVERY  
AND THE  
SLAVE TRADE.

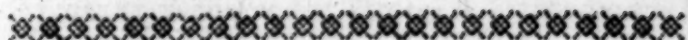
Servi sunt? imo homines. Servi sunt? imo con-  
tubernales. Servi sunt? imo humiles amici.  
Servi sunt? imo conservi, si cogitaveris tantun-  
dem in utrosque licere Fortunæ.

SENECA, Ep. 47.

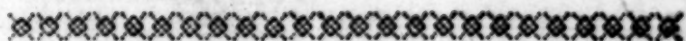
Tell them in vain they grace with festive joy,  
The day that freed them from Oppression's rod,  
At Slavery's mart who barter and who buy  
The image of their God. MASON.

OF THE  
BY D. TRINICK AND J. COOKE; J. AND J. HEDDERLEY  
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CONSIDERATIONS  
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ABOLITION OF SLAVERY  
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[Price Two Shillings and Sixpence.]

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LATELY PUBLISHED,

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7. Coelestis Criticismus Observationum &c.  
 1788.
8. Considerations on the Abolition of Slavery  
 and the Slave Trade. 1789.

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LEY



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CONSIDERATIONS  
ON THE  
ABOLITION OF SLAVERY  
AND THE  
SLAVE TRADE,  
IN A LETTER TO A FRIEND.

DEAR SIR,

THE following Considerations on the Abolition of Slavery and the Slave Trade you have the best title to, as they owe their origin to your suggestion, and their publication to your encouragement. Of the first ideas of these Considerations you were pleased to think not unfavourably: I shall be happy, if what I now send you, should in any degree satisfy your judgement on a subject; which interests you so much in common with every friend of religion, humanity, and  
A freedom,



freedom. I propose to consider the practices of Slavery and the Slave Trade upon grounds of natural, religious and political duty. In reply to the *SCRIPTURAL RESEARCHES on the licitness of the Slave Trade*, examined under the two first heads of these Considerations, several answers have appeared from the press to vindicate the purity of scripture truth from the misrepresentations of the "Researches;" and (I confess) I think that the fallacies and errors of that work have been, for the most part, completely exposed and refuted.\* — But why then publish, if so much has been done, and so well done?—All readers, you tell me, are not equally influenced by the same exhibition of a subject; and on a subject of so much consequence to the happiness of thousands yet unborn, as the question respecting the abolition of Slavery and the Slave Trade, if any new arguments can be brought,

\* Especially in Mr. Danett's excellent *Examination*. The other answers are an Anonymous *Scriptural Refutation* of the *Scriptural Researches*; Mr. Ramsay's *Examination*; and Mr. Hughes's *Answer*. The *Researches* have been adverted to in the new edition of Mr. Gregory's ingenious *Essays Historical and Moral*, p. 406. and in an Anonymous Pamphlet entitled *Am I not a Man and a Brother?*



or known arguments set in a new light, the trial is worth making. To this reason you encouragingly add another, which comes nearer to the "Researches," that though the fallacies and errors of that work have been for the most part completely refuted, yet Mr. Harris's first position, that *the Slave Trade is conformable to the principles of the law of Nature delineated in the Sacred writings*, has escaped the animadversion of his Remarkers. — This position has been neglected by the Remarkers, I conceive, not because it is a subject of difficult solution, but because the Researcher has drawn the reader's attention from the principle of his position by more sophistry and evasion than has been shewn, perhaps, in the whole of his Researches besides. I do not mean to detract from the merit of the other answers to Mr. Harris, and I should be sorry to have the remark extended beyond my meaning. Mr. Danett† has noticed the impropriety of considering Abraham as living under the law of Nature, and all have

† *Particular Examination of Mr. Harris's Scriptural Researches.* p. 1.

controverted the facts alleged in the conduct of Abraham and Joseph. But they seem to me to leave Mr. Harris in possession of his principle by not shewing more fully its misapplication, and the defect of the *only proper evidence* to try the assertion. I shall produce the evidence, which Mr. Harris has suppressed, and shall examine the position at some length, not only because the fallacious application of it has been unnoticed in the several answers, but because such an examination will afford an opportunity of opposing some of the general arguments for the licitness of the Slave Trade by arguments, which, I believe, have not been preoccupied. I shall pursue the inferences, which I deduce from the principles of *natural* right and *scriptural* authority, and endeavour to confirm them by reasons of *political* duty derived from our civil constitution. The inconsistency between Slavery or the Slave Trade, and the general principles of our law and constitution, between the permission of such usages and our high pretensions to civil liberty, appeared to contain arguments for the abolition of Slavery,

not

not less powerful on one hand, than the injunctions of Scripture, and the rights of Nature on the other. But while no small share of eloquence has been displayed in asserting the claims of Nature, and the genuine injunctions of God's word, this political inconsistency has been very little insisted on in the many publications, which the present emergency has produced. That it should not have been insisted on, is the more remarkable now the question is become an object of national inquiry; especially as the comparison of Slavery, of West Indian Slavery, and the tyranny of English subjects, is a topic, which admits and deserves all the colouring, which passion and eloquence can bestow. I would it were in my power to repair this omission, and do the justice to such a subject, which it deserves. But that you will not expect from these sketches of epistolary conversation. All that I pretend to give you, are some faithful but very imperfect impressions of good will and good wishes to the great cause you favour. A cause, which connects itself with every subject of Great Britain by so many ties,

who

who does not wish, however remotely, to assist ?

Before I enter on the subject of the position just mentioned, I shall take the liberty of offering you some reasons for the propriety of trying the question of Slavery and the Slave Trade on the high grounds of natural and religious duty ; and at the same time shall lay before you an account of Mr. Harris's Data and general mode of reasoning.

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If the Slave Trade be considered in the aggregate, there are a thousand subordinate circumstances of private interest and national advantage to conceal its horrors and deformities. Is it inconsistent with the general rights of mankind ? It is beneficial \* to *our own nation*.

\* The reader will not consider this as any concession in favour of the Slave Trade. A trade, separately taken, may be said to be *beneficial* to a nation, if it enriches individuals, and increases the public revenue. But relatively and comparatively taken, it may be highly injurious, by preventing the establishment of *more beneficial* branches of commerce, and by producing many bad consequences more than equivalent to its good effects. See below, note † p. 91, p. 105, &c. and the Postscript.

Has



Has it oppressed and destroyed millions of our fellow creatures? It has enriched many of *our own* merchants. Is it continued and supported with oppression and cruelty? It administers to *our own* luxuries. But divest it of all subordinate considerations; examine it in its principle, and try it by *the ultimate rule of all human actions*, and this complex question of the licitness of the Slave Trade may perhaps be easily decided. Is it consistent or inconsistent with *the will of God*? If it be clearly inconsistent with the will of God, all private and commercial interests, all temporal and national advantages are lighter than the dust that is on the balance. The Author of the Scriptural Researches has chosen to try the licitness of the Slave Trade by this rule, and pronounces, that it is not only permitted by the written will of God, the Scriptures, but encouraged, and enjoined.

There is a novelty in this doctrine, which at least makes it a subject of curiosity. The Scriptures must have been hitherto very ill under-



understood, and very erroneously explained, if any just mode of interpretation can elicit such a doctrine. That very specious arguments should be derived from grounds of national expediency in favour of a Trade, however unjust, inhuman, and unnatural it may appear, which involves so many branches of national commerce, as have been ascribed to the Slave Trade, is no wonder : or that those arguments should influence the opinions of interested men, in other respects, even of liberal and enlarged humanity. The pursuits of national wealth are unfortunately too often at variance with the precepts of moral justice ; and the ends of private interest assume too much the appearance of national advantage, not to elude the most urgent remonstrances of Nature and of Duty. But that any custom so repugnant to the natural rights of mankind, as the Slave Trade, or Slavery, the source and support of the Trade, should be thought to be consonant to the principles of natural and revealed religion ; that the Scriptures should not only not prohibit the Slave Trade,

Trade, but enjoin the practise of it, is a paradox, which it is difficult to reconcile with the reverence, which is due to the records of our holy religion. Many attacks have been made of late on the authority of Scripture both by the avowed enemies of Christianity and its professed friends. But nothing would more effectually subvert its authority, than to prove that its injunctions are inconsistent with the common principles of benevolence, and inimical to the general rights of mankind. It would degrade the sanctity of Scripture, it would reverse all our ideas of God's paternal attributes, and all arguments for the divine origin of the Christian religion derived from its precepts of universal charity and benevolence. Indeed the Researches contain such shocking alternatives with respect to the Deity, such levity in the discussion of scriptural authorities, yet accompanied with such professions of reverence for the Deity and his Scriptures, so overcharged, and so incongruous to the object of the Researches, that if the Author is serious in

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his

his professions, he has unfortunately left on the minds, I believe of most of his readers, an impression very different from what he intended. When a writer professes his reverence for Scripture and declares himself the friend of freedom, humanity, and virtue, who has any right to question his professions? But if with his reverence for Scripture his Researches tend to prove that the laws of God are inconsistent with the laws of Nature; if with all his love of virtue, humanity, and freedom, he becomes in his conclusions the advocate of injustice, rapine, and oppression, whatever is allowed to his sincerity must at least be deducted from his discernment.

But while we do justice to the sincerity of his professions, it would be great injustice to the subject, not to observe that these professions are calculated to mislead the incautious reader, and restrain the exercise of his judgment. There is something so repulsive in the assertion, that the Slave Trade is authorized and enjoined by Scripture, that it requires all the

the external aids of persuasion, such as professions of piety, of regard for humanity and freedom, and a display of geometrical and logical pretensions, to conciliate any attention from the reader. Accordingly the Author makes an implicit reverence for the Deity and his scriptures, the chief principle on which he builds his hopes of establishing the licitness of the Slave Trade; and "expects conviction only from such persons as are not so far destitute of every sentiment of religion and good sense, as to disbelieve the divine authority of the sacred writings, in which the finger of God has left in indelible characters the visible impression of his wisdom." \* In still stronger terms he adds (p. 76.) that "whoever does not acquiesce in the scriptural decisions, quoted in the Researches, declaring in formal words the licitness of the Slave Trade, cannot be said to acknowledge in fact that the holy scriptures are the unerring word of God." Every reader must feel a disposition to admit without

\* P. 7.



further inquiry the result of that reasoning, which is professed to be deduced from the wisdom of God, and the decision of his Scriptures. And if we are to renounce the Bible or admit the licitness of the Slave Trade, who can deliberate? The very form of the Researches seems rather intended to command acquiescence, than excite inquiry. For who would suppose those arguments to be imperfect, which confidently appeal to Logic; or that reasoning to be without certainty, which is intrenched in Corollaries and Data? But *non tam auctores in disputando*, (qui aut quales, says Cicero,) *sed momenta rationis quaerenda sunt.*

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I have given you a general account of the impressions, which were left on my mind, on a perusal of the Scriptural Researches. I shall now consider more particularly the principles from which the scriptural doctrine of the Slave Trade is said to be deduced.

To the Researches are prefixed certain  
*Data,*



*Data*, as general and fundamental principles of the inferences, which are drawn from the passages of Scripture quoted in the Researches, \* *Data*, which are to serve as general principles to particular facts should be unquestionably true in themselves, should be strictly definite in their terms, and should be necessary to the subsequent reasoning. If they are not necessary, they can answer no other purpose than of ostentation and artifice; if they are not definite, they can serve only the ends of fallacy and circumvention: and if they are not unquestionably true, they cannot be general principles, and any thing rather than *Data*. I shall endeavour to see how far the Data of the Researches possess the proper re-

\* "I have prefixed, says the Author, to the whole a few positions or Data, which I trust will be found *unquestionably true*, and exactly conformable to sound reason; in order that I may not be interrupted in the sequel with unnecessary repetitions of *general principles*, nor be in the least constrained to enter into a formal confutation of arguments, which do not immediately affect my subject, and that the Reader may see at one view the very *fundamental principles* of those inferences, which I draw in favour of the SLAVE TRADE from the Scriptural passages I have selected in the course of my Researches, out of a greater number of the same import I could easily produce."

quifites,

quisites. If I should canvass the terms rather minutely, I trust you will not impute it to a desire of cavilling, or think me unnecessarily minute. A writer, who advances, under the authority of Scripture, a doctrine, which excites our abhorrence, and comes forward with extraordinary pretensions of demonstrative exactness, challenges a more than usual scrutiny of his terms and proofs. If he assumes the forms of Demonstration, but at the same time throws a cloud of words before our eyes, it is necessary to dissipate the dust that is raised between us and the object of our attention.

Datum I. " That the Volume of the Sacred Writings commonly called the Holy Bible, comprehending both the Old and New Testaments, contains the unerring Decisions of the Word of God."

The plain and proper sense of this Proposition no one can doubt the truth of; but before it can be admitted as a Datum to researches into Scriptural doctrines, it is necessary

sary to define the extent of the term "Decisions." *Decisions of the word of God* can mean only certain declarations of God's will, whether by command or prohibition, or by judgement passed on actions already done. But there are many transactions both of an indifferent and criminal nature recorded in Scripture, which in the mere record neither express or imply any declaration of God's will. So that though the decisions of the word of God are contained in the Bible, all things recorded in the Bible are not decisions of God's word: much less can we say that all transactions and customs recorded in Scripture are sanctified by the record.

Datum II. "That these Decisions are of equal authority in both Testaments."

Not granted: Because many of God's injunctions and permissions in the Old Testament were addressed to the particular circumstances of the Jews, and are not binding on Christians. A slight attention to the dispensations

sations of Moses and of Christ will explain why many injunctions of the law of Moses are not binding under the Christian dispensation. The law of Moses was given to a peculiar people separated from the rest of mankind, and destined to preserve the true knowledge of God uncorrupted by the errors and superstitions of the surrounding nations. For this reason it seems, that though the Decalogue relates to general duties incumbent on all mankind, the ceremonial and judicial law was accommodated to the exigencies of a peculiar people; and was in a variety of respects, by many peculiarities, and repugnancies to the customs of other nations, calculated to keep the Jews a separate and peculiar nation. But by the new Covenant between God and Man the wall of separation was removed. The nations were no longer to be considered as unhallowed and unclean: but all Men were to be united under one leader and Saviour. Therefore the new law does not repeat the peculiar injunctions of ritual and judicial observances in the old, but

is



is confined to the great principles of religious and moral duty contained in the Decalogue, though explained and enforced with greater purity. Its principles are of universal application; they assimilate equally with all situations and interests, and tend to promote peace and good will, and concord amongst all Men. By this difference in the two dispensations many of the injunctions of the old law lose their obligation on the followers of the new, some being superseded by the greater efficacy of a subsequent law;† others, though not expressly, yet by their inconsistency with the general purity and charity of the new.

Datum III. “ That as there can be no  
“ prescription against the authority of God,  
“ whatever is declared in any part of the  
“ Scriptural Records to be intrinsically good  
“ or bad, licit or illicit, must be essentially  
“ so in its own nature, however contrary any

† Ὁ γὰρ ὡς Χρησ παλαιος ἡδη νομος, καὶ ὕμνη μου· ὁ δὲ παλαιὸς αἰπλως. Νομος δὲ κατὰ νομον τιθεὶς τὸν πρὸ αὐτοῦ σταθερὸν· καὶ δια-  
θῆκε μετ’ ὅλητα γινώσκων τὴν προτέρην ἀποστολὴν ἐσθλὴν. Justin. Mar.  
Dial. c. Tr. p. 34. 35.

“such declaration may be to the received  
 “opinions of men for any length of time.”  
 i. e. in fewer words, Whatever action or  
 custom is *declared* in Scripture to be intrinsi-  
 cally good &c. *must* be intrinsically good,  
 though such action or custom may be by men  
 universally considered as bad.

We know that *the word of God is true  
 from the beginning*, and that *his truth endu-  
 reth to all generations*. But are things ever  
*declared* in Scripture to be *intrinsically* good,  
 or intrinsically bad? If there are no such  
 declarations, it is not consistent with fair en-  
 quiry to insinuate them. The instructions  
 of Scripture, I apprehend, do not rest on  
 the intrinsic and essential natures of things,  
 or actions, (which are of too abstract and  
 evanescent a nature to influence the conduct  
 of mankind;) but on the plain, palpable  
 will and commands of God. The conclusion  
 of the Datum supposes, what, I conceive to be  
 an impossible contradiction, that the *intrinsic*  
 goodness or badness of a thing may be *con-  
 trary* to the universally received opinions of  
 Men.

Men. Whatever appears to the generality of Mankind to be intrinsically bad cannot be, I think, essentially good. The universal sense of Mankind is founded on the common feelings implanted in human nature by God, and is nothing less than God's unwritten will, and can never be *contrary* to any written law of God.

Datum IV. "That as the Supreme Legislator of the World is infinitely just and wise in all his decisions respecting *Right* and *Wrong*, and is no ways accountable to his creatures for the reasons of his conduct in the government of the world; so it must be a degree of presumption highly criminal in any creature to refuse assent to those Decisions, only because he cannot comprehend the hidden principles of that impartial justice, which characterizes every decision of God." Granted, with no other objection but its inutility to the Scriptural Researches.

Datum V. " That no person can be supposed to acknowledge in fact, that the holy Scriptures are the infallible word of God, unless he acquiesces without reserve in every scriptural decision however incomprehensible the reasons and motives may be to him."

If *acquiesces in every scriptural decision* mean *obeys every scriptural injunction*, this Datum cannot be granted, because many injunctions not only of ritual but even of judicial authority under the first Dispensation were abrogated by the second for reasons mentioned in the Remark on Dat. 2.

Datum VI. " That every person, who acknowledges the Holy Scriptures to be the unerring Word of God, must consequently assent to every Scriptural Decision without reserve, only because he believes them to be the declarations of God; who being TRUTH itself can neither err, nor lead any one into error." Answered by Remark on Dat. V.

Datum



Datum VII. " That if one or more Decisions of the written word of God give a positive sanction to the intrinsic licitness of any human pursuit, for instance, (the *Slave Trade*,) whoever professes to believe the incontrovertible veracity of the written word of God, essentially incompatible with the least degree of injustice, must consequently believe the pursuit itself to be intrinsically just and lawful in the strictest sense of the word."

From this multitude of words it is difficult to collect the Author's precise meaning. If by giving a *positive sanction to the intrinsic licitness of any pursuit* he means merely a declaration of Scripture, that a pursuit *is intrinsically licit*, and consequently that whatever is declared in Scripture to be intrinsically licit *must be* intrinsically just and lawful, it amounts to no more than the proposition contained in Dat. 3. and has been answered in its place. If it means that whatever is *declared* in Scripture to be *licit*, must be *intrinsically* lawful, that

that cannot be granted ; because whatever is intrinsically just and lawful must be universally just and lawful ; for the intrinsic natures of things are independent of all external accidents, whether of time or place. But there were many things permitted by God in the Mosaic dispensation, which were forbidden by Christ, and therefore could not have been universally and intrinsically just and lawful. Different situations of Society and Religion make great differences in the expediency even of the same actions. See Rem. on Dat. II.

There is besides an obvious impropriety in attempting to prove the *intrinsic* licitness of an action from the permissions or injunctions of Scripture, that is from its *external* obligations. Whatever is said to be intrinsically good or bad is commonly understood to be so in its own nature, independently of all external circumstances. An action which is *intrinsically* and *essentially* good is so independently of the command, which enjoins it. It would be an innaccuracy therefore unbecoming the  
 writer

writer of Data, to say that a pursuit is intrinsically good *because* it is so declared or enjoined in Scripture. If any thing were *said* in Scripture to be intrinsically good, I should *believe* it to be so on the *authority* of Scripture. But if it *be* intrinsically good, it *is* so, in its own nature, and does not *become* so through the authority, that gives it sanction.

Data VIII. IX. X. XI. XII. These five Data are positions not of Scriptural authority, but of general policy, and are so far foreign to the subject of the Scriptural Researches. They proceed too on the supposition that Slavery and the Slave Trade are intrinsically just. I have before mentioned the impropriety of attempting to prove the intrinsic licitness of an action from its external obligation. Intrinsic qualities are to be discovered, if at all, from their effects. The intrinsic good of any thing may, perhaps, not improperly be called its fitness to the end for which it was intended. Mutual protection and happiness are the ends of Society. As all moral goods have  
reference

reference to Society, any moral good may be said to be intrinsically good, which conduces to those ends of Society. Whatever therefore contributes to the happiness of our fellow creatures, and to maintain the just rights of Society, is intrinsically good, because it promotes the peace and well-being of Society. Whether Slavery and the Slave Trade can be reckoned amongst the moral goods or evils, and whether they conduce to the peace and well being of Society, or the contrary, though it is an insult to common sense to ask, I shall endeavour to shew, when I come to examine the Researcher's position, that *the Slave Trade is conformable to the principles of the law of Nature delineated in the Sacred writings.*

Datum IX. The 8th. Datum is included in the 9th, and 10th. The 9th is as follows:  
 “ That as no private or national advantages  
 “ whatever can alter the inherent turpitude  
 “ of a pursuit essentially unlawful : so no ar-  
 “ guments, whatever built solely on the  
 “ strength



“ strength of those advantages, will ever justify the Slave Trade, till the same be proved essentially just and lawful in its nature.” Granted, in its full force.

Datum X. “ That as no abuses or malepractices whatever, committed in the prosecution of a lawful pursuit can ever alter the intrinsic licitness of it : so no arguments whatever, built solely on the strength of those abuses, will ever evince the intrinsic deformity of the *Slave Trade*, any more than that of any other lawful pursuit, where abuses are committed, unless the same be proved essentially unjust and illicit.”

Granted, that the abuses of any pursuit do not prove the intrinsic deformity of it ; but these abuses may totally alter its expediency. A pursuit may, abstractedly and intrinsically understood, not be contrary to law ; it may be indifferent, or it may, perhaps, be just and lawful, and yet its effects be highly injurious to Society. *All things are lawful unto*

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me,

*me, says St. Paul, but all things are not expedient.* The collateral effects may not shew the intrinsic deformity of the pursuit itself. But it is of very little concern to Society, whether an action can be *proved* to be intrinsically and essentially criminal or not, if its concomitant effects are injurious to Society. The abstract and intrinsic nature of actions can form no rule for the general conduct of mankind. Such a rule would be susceptible of the worst perversions. There are few crimes, which might not be justified, if considered abstractedly from their general effects and consequences.

Datum XI. "That if abuses and male-  
 " practises, committed in the prosecution of  
 " a lawful pursuit, can be checked and pre-  
 " vented by legal Authority, the private and  
 " national advantages arising from that pur-  
 " suit, joined to its intrinsic licitness, ought  
 " to have a very powerful influence towards  
 " not abolishing the prosecution of that pur-  
 " suit."

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This proposition is too hypothetical to deserve any consideration as a Datum. If the experience of two centuries did not forbid us to suppose, that the abuses, as they are called, of Slavery and the Slave Trade could be effectually checked and prevented by legal authority, yet the very nature of the offences complained of resists the supposition. Oppression, cruelty, the degradation of the human species, and repugnance to the British constitution, are evils inseparable from Slavery and the Slave Trade.

Datum XII. " That if abuses and male-  
 " practises, though evidently subject to the  
 " controul of the Legislature, are to be con-  
 " sidered as sufficient arguments to suppress  
 " the *Slave Trade*, without any regard to its  
 " intrinsic licitness, every other branch of  
 " Trade, in which abuses are committed,  
 " ought, on the same account, to share the  
 " same fate."

This Proposition deserves as little conside-

ration as the proceeding. The enormity of one crime is not lessened by the existence of another as great. It is one of the arts of a bad cause to involve in the event of it other consequences, which are perfectly foreign to the question. By such a mixture of irrelative circumstances, while the attention of the reader becomes occupied with some image of remote resemblance, the suspended judgment is often restrained from decision, or misled to conclusions very adverse to the original question.

From this view of the Data you will I think agree with me that they consist of positions, for the most part, either undoubtedly wrong, or very disputable, or unnecessary to the Researches. The unquestionable positions, that *the Bible contains the word of God*, that *the word of God is true*, and that *the ways of God are just and wise however impossible it may be for us to apprehend the truth of his word, or the wisdom of his ways*, are unnecessary to any inquiry into Scripture for  
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the rules of *moral* conduct. Such Data may be necessary in disquisitions on the incomprehensible attributes of the divine nature and providence, where reason has no other criterion ; but on questions of moral conduct, such Data can have no other effect than to give an improper bias to the mind, to predispose it to take for granted, what is to be proved, and (when prefixed to Researches, which pretend to prove the moral conformity of the Slave Trade with the principles of natural and revealed Religion) to prepossess it with an opinion that the Scripture History contains customs exactly analogous to the Slave Trade and confirmed not only by the permission but positive command of God.

The Researches are divided into three Chapters, in which the Author undertakes to prove that “ the Slave Trade is perfectly  
 “ consonant to the principles of the Law of  
 “ Nature, the Mosaic Dispensation, and the  
 “ Christian law, as delineated to us in the  
 “ sacred

“ sacred writings of the word of God.” To all that has been advanced in the Researches and the Data, whether scriptural or political, in proof of these assertions, it may perhaps be sufficient to oppose the following positions :

1. That Slavery and the Slave Trade are inconsistent with the principles of the law of Nature deducible from Scripture, for reasons, which will be stated hereafter.

2. That no conclusion can be drawn in favour of West Indian Slavery or the African Slave Trade from particular transactions recorded in Scripture : — because the transactions in Scripture bear no resemblance to the Slavery and Slave Trade in question, and because transactions merely recorded in Scripture History are not sanctified by the record.

3. That no conclusion can be drawn in favour of West Indian Slavery or the African Slave Trade from the Hebrew laws respecting Slavery : — because the conditions are by no means

means analogous, and because (if they were) laws neither introduce nor justify every custom, which they regulate.

4. That the clearest and fullest permission of Slavery to the Jews under the laws of Moses does not make it allowable to Christians : — because the new law has annulled the old in all its ritual and judicial ordinances. We cannot reason from one state of Religion to another, where any great revolution has intervened in the progress of Religion.

5. That however such permission might appear to make Slavery in any degree allowable to the first Hebrew Christians under the Roman government, it does not by any means make it allowable under the free government of this country : — because we cannot reason from one form of Government to another ; nor even from one state of Society to another under the same form of government, where any remarkable revolution has intervened in the progress of political Society.

6. That

6. That whatever may be the commercial and national advantages of Slavery and the Slave Trade, they ought not to be tolerated, because of the inadequacy of those advantages to their many bad effects and consequences.

7. That Slavery and the Slave Trade ought to be abolished on account of the good, which would follow from the abolition to Religion, to Mankind in general, and to Ourselves.

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I have now laid before You a view of the *principles* of Mr. Harris's reasoning, and what I conceive to be their defects : I have given you my reasons for thinking that the question of the Slave Trade, not only as a great national question, but as the cause of human nature, should be considered independently of all private and commercial interests ; and on that ground I afterwards adopted most fully Mr. Harris's Datum, " That as no private or national advantages whatever can alter the  
 " inherent



“ inherent turpitude of a pursuit essentially  
 “ unlawful : so no arguments whatever built  
 “ solely on those advantages will ever justify  
 “ the *Slave Trade* till the same be proved  
 “ essentially just and lawful in its nature.”

I come now to his very extraordinary position, that the *Slave Trade* is conformable with the principles of the *Law of Nature* delineated in the *Sacred writings*:

The perverse use of the term *Slave Trade* for *Slavery* through the whole of his Researches has been well observed by Mr. Ramsay and Mr. Danett. It is a perversion of language which invalidates all his inferences from the *transactions* and *laws* recorded in Scripture. *Ex comparatis imparibus vitiosa fit argumentatio.*

There is another defect in his terms equally great in applying what he calls the *Law of Nature* to his subject. “ It is evident, he  
 “ says, from the tenour of the *Sacred Re-*  
 “ cords, that between the creation of Adam

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“ and

" and the promulgation of the Mosaic law,  
 " the dispensation of the Law of Nature,  
 " commonly called natural Religion, or the  
 " Religion of Nature, was the only true Re-  
 " ligion in the world." (p. 12.) What the  
 Researcher meant by the " Law of Nature  
 " being the *only true Religion*," it is not easy  
 to discover. Religion, I believe, is usually  
 distinguished into Natural and Revealed. If  
 natural Religion was during that period the  
 only true Religion, there could have been no  
 revealed Religion. If there was no revealed  
 Religion till the promulgation of the Mosaic  
 law, then natural religion must have been the  
*only religion*. But, further, we know that,  
 during that period, together with the wor-  
 ship of one God prevailed also the abomina-  
 tions of Idolatrous worship. Idolatry, as it  
 was not the true religion, certainly was no  
 part of revealed religion. How then can it  
 be said, that natural religion was the only  
 true religion? We should reverse the propo-  
 sition; for we know, that all religion, which  
 was not revealed, was a deviation from the  
 true.

But

But the Researcher says that "that period  
 " of years, which elapsed from the day on  
 " which God created Man in his own image,  
 " to the day, on which He gave his laws to  
 " the children of Israel on Mount Sinai, is  
 " generally called the period of the law of  
 " Nature." He does not quote his authorities; and I doubt whether the opinion be *generally* received, but I have more doubt of its propriety. The laws of Nature, and the religion of Nature are not the laws and religion of a particular period. The laws of Nature (as far as they regard the intercourse between Man and Man) are certain universal and permanent principles conducive to the general good of Society. The religion of Nature consists of certain notions of a superior being, collected from the works of creation, and of ordinances of religious worship established without any divine communications. Therefore the period in question cannot be called, exclusively, the period of the Law of Nature, because the Law of Nature is the law of all times and all ages: nor the period of Natural

Religion, because (as we know from the only *authentic* history of the first ages of the world) no period was more distinguished by communications between God and his creatures. I should rather call it *the period of the unwritten law*.

But if the Researcher's terms are inaccurate, the grounds of his reasoning in the progress of his argument are not less defective. For if the period before mentioned be improperly called the period of the Law of Nature, the transactions, which he considers as conformable with the principles of the law of Nature, *because* transacted *during* this period, are not available. Another, and indeed the most material defect is *the defect of Evidence*. When the Researcher undertakes to shew that the Slave Trade is in conformity with *the principles of the law of Nature*, the reader reasonably expects to find *these principles* fairly confronted with the practice of the Slave Trade. This however the Researcher declines, excusing himself from entering at large



large into the subject, “ because, he says, it  
 “ would be exceedingly difficult, as well as  
 “ extraneous to my present subject, to digest  
 “ those principles into a regular code of those  
 “ particular laws and duties, which constitu-  
 “ ted the whole system of that Religion : I  
 “ am to shew no further, than that the prin-  
 “ ciples and laws of that Religion, as far as  
 “ we find them delineated in the Sacred wri-  
 “ tings, not only never forbade the Slave  
 “ Trade, or hinted the most distant opposi-  
 “ tion to the prosecution of it : but that the  
 “ same being frequently exemplified in the  
 “ constant and uninterrupted practise of some  
 “ of the most faithful observers of the laws  
 “ and principles of that Religion, under the  
 “ visible protection of God, whose favourites  
 “ they were, the laws and principles them-  
 “ selves were in perfect harmony with the  
 “ practise of the Slave Trade.”

To prove the congruity or incongruity of  
 the Slave Trade with the law of Nature as  
 deducible from Scripture, does not demand  
 such

such an effort of elaborate investigation, as a compleat digest of natural laws and duties. But if it was unnecessary to detail the whole law of Nature, the great leading injunctions of this law lie in so small a compass, that at least, some of its principles might have been selected. But the Researcher does not produce a single law or principle of Nature to support his assertion. And how does he supply the want of such evidence? By induction from the conduct of two individuals, (good and virtuous Men, but yet Men,) he infers, that the laws of Nature must have been consonant to their practise. One objection to this inference has been already noticed. A second objection, is an objection, which belongs to the whole of the Researches, that the circumstances in the conduct of these individuals have no resemblance to the African Slave Trade. Of course no conclusion can be drawn from the comparison. Another objection not less strong is, that to draw a general conclusion from such particulars, would be illogical, even if the lives of the best of Men

Men had been less marked, than they are, by a mixture of good and evil. But as we know of only one Man, who was incapable of evil, we cannot make the lives of a few peccable individuals the standard of Nature: we cannot reason from their conduct to Nature's uniform and permanent laws.

I will supply the Author's omission, by producing some of the laws of Nature as tests of Slavery, and, by consequence, of the Slave Trade. It must be obvious how essential this comparison is to the ultimate decision of the Inquiry into the licitness of the Slave Trade. For the will of God, which must be the criterion of all human actions, is known either from the positive laws of God revealed in Scripture; or is to be collected from the laws of Nature. The laws of Nature are the unwritten will of God, and consist of certain universal and permanent principles conducive to the general good of Society. Such laws of our Nature could have been implanted only by the Author of our being; and the will of  
God

God is as visibly marked in these principles of Nature as in his written word. By a few of these principles I mean to try the practise of Slavery; not of the African Slave Trade, because there is no mention of any commerce in the Bible, which in any degree resembles it; nor of West Indian Slavery, because that too has no parallel in Scripture: but the practise of Slavery in general; because if it can be made appear that Slavery is inconsistent with the *principles of the law of nature* deducible from Scripture, and therefore with the *will of God*; much more so will the cruelties of West Indian Slavery, and the enormities of the African Slave Trade.

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I am aware, that I pay no compliment to Your judgement or feeling, when I attempt to *prove*, that Slavery is inconsistent with the principles of the *law of Nature* deducible from Scripture. But the opposite opinion has been asserted in vindication of a custom long established. An assertion therefore, which



which has the tacit sanction of custom, and the support of an avowed advocate; you may think perhaps not undeserving of some notice; and the occasion will be my apology for detailing to you principles and reasons, which from your knowledge of the subject, and the interest, which You take in it, You will probably have anticipated.

The whole law of Nature, as it regards the intercourse between Man and Man, originates from the two great principles of *Self-love*, and *Social Affection*. Self-love is the first principle of our nature, and belongs in common to all animated beings, embracing the rights of self-preservation and personal freedom. On these rights is founded the absolute equality of all men, considered as independent individuals. But this absolute right, though a real, inherent right, like the primary matter of the Metaphysicians, can be collected only by abstraction. The different necessities of life render Men dependent on their fellow members of Society. It is through this dependence that the natural pri-  

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vileges

vileges of liberty and equality become variously modified, without extinguishing the principle. The establishment of property, and the necessity of mutual defence, introduced new situations and obligations; but while the right of personal power and liberty was in some measure abridged, it was compensated by personal advantages more than equivalent to the exchange. Wherever the abridgement of liberty was not compensated by an equivalent exchange, it became an act of violence, contrary to nature, and to the inalienable rights of Society.

Slavery, even in its mildest sense,\* considered as unlimited, involuntary, uncompensated subjection to the service of another, is a total annihilation of all natural rights. It is accordingly defined in the *Imperial Institutes*

\* Slavery in its strictest sense implies an absolute power in the master over the *life* as well as the liberty and service of his Slave. The Colonial Laws do not indeed warrant the power over *life*. By the Jamaica laws the wilful murder of a Slave is made felony, though with benefit of clergy; and is punished by imprisonment, and the second offence by death. But the security of the Master requires such a latitude in explaining the conduct of his Slaves, and renders that conduct so liable to the misinterpretation of resistance and rebellion, that the killing of a Slave can seldom be construed into murder.

to be *constitutio juris gentium, qua quis dominio alieno contra naturam subjicitur*. It would be impertinent to dwell on a point so acknowledged, and so well discussed by the best writers on Law and Government. † It is rather my

† Judge Blackstone's opinion is of too much weight to be omitted. He denies and clearly disproves the three sorts of right to make or hold slaves, which are said to arise *jure gentium*, from a state of captivity in war; *jure civili*, when one man sells himself to another; or *jure naturæ*, by a negative kind of birthright, when children are born of slaves. "The three origins of the right of slavery, assigned by Justinian, are all of them built upon false foundations. As, first, slavery is held to arise "*jure gentium*," from a state of captivity in war; whence slaves are called *mancipia, quasi manu capti*. The conqueror, say the civilians, had a right to the life of his captive; and, having spared that, has a right to deal with him as he pleases. But it is an untrue position, when taken generally, that, by the law of nature or nations, a man may kill his enemy: he has only a right to kill him, in particular cases; in cases of absolute necessity, for self-defence; and it is plain this absolute necessity did not subsist, since the victor did not actually kill him, but made him prisoner. War is itself justifiable only on principles of self-preservation; and therefore it gives no other right over prisoners but merely to disable them from doing harm to us, by confining their persons: much less can it give a right to kill, torture, abuse, plunder, or even to enslave, an enemy, when the war is over. Since therefore the right of making slaves by captivity depends on a supposed right of slaughter, that foundation failing, the consequence drawn from it must fail likewise. But, secondly, it is said that slavery may begin "*jure civili*;" when one man sells himself to another. This, if only meant of con-

tracts

business to shew, that the absolute dominion of Man over Man is inconsistent with the rights of Society deducible from Scripture, The extent of these rights may be collected from God's first commission to Man; and from the concurrence of the Hebrew law with the custom of other nations. In God's first commission to Man, which gives him dominion over the *brute* creation, there is no expression, from which Adam or any of his

"tracts to serve or work for another, is very just: but when  
 "applied to strict slavery, in the sense of the laws of old  
 "Rome or modern Barbary, is also impossible. Every sale  
 "implies a price, a *quid pro quo*, an equivalent given to the  
 "seller in lieu of what he transfers to the buyer: but what  
 "equivalent can be given for life, and liberty, both of which  
 "(in absolute slavery) are held to be in the master's disposal?  
 "His property also, the very price he seems to receive, de-  
 "volves *ipso facto* to his master, the instant he becomes his  
 "slave. In this case therefore the buyer gives nothing, and  
 "the seller receives nothing: of what validity then can a sale  
 "be, which destroys the very principles upon which all sales  
 "are founded? Lastly, we are told, that besides these two  
 "ways by which slaves "*fiunt*," or are acquired, they may  
 "also be hereditary: "*servi nascuntur*;" the children of ac-  
 "quired slaves are *jure naturæ*, by a negative kind of birth-  
 "right, slaves also. But this, being built on the two former  
 "rights, must fall together with them. If neither captivity,  
 "nor the sale of one's self, can by the law of nature and rea-  
 "son reduce the parent to slavery, much less can they reduce  
 "the offspring." Commentaries, B. I. Ch. XIV. p. 423.

posterity



posterity could collect, that they had a right of dominion over their own species. " So  
 " God created Man in his own image, in the  
 " image of God created he him : male and  
 " female created he them. And God blessed  
 " them and God said unto them, Be fruitful  
 " and multiply, and replenish the Earth, and  
 " subdue it : and have dominion over the fish  
 " of the sea, and over the fowl of the air,  
 " and over every living thing, that moveth  
 " upon the earth." The extent of this primary charter cannot be more forcibly expressed than in the language of our great Poet :

O execrable son, so to aspire  
 Above his brethren, to himself assuming  
 Authority usurp'd, from God not given :  
 He gave us only over beast, fish, fowl  
 Dominion absolute ; that right we hold  
 By his donation ; but man over men  
 He made not lord ; such title to himself  
 Reserving, human left from human free.

The acknowledgement, and prevailing influence of these principles in preserving the  
 general

general rights of Society, may be inferred from the common concurrence of the Hebrews and all nations in exempting their native subjects from involuntary servitude. The Hebrews were permitted to have bondsmen or slaves of the heathen nations, but were forbidden by their law to keep an Hebrew in bondage. Their abhorrence of Slavery appears from the general tenour of their History. The execration denounced against the family and race of Ham was the *curse* of Slavery : the remembrance of their delivery from the house of Ægyptian bondage, was perpetuated by periodical celebrities and feasts. When any nation, ancient or modern, has suffered the slavery of a native, it was only where such native by some violation of the rights of Society has forfeited all personal rights ; or by a voluntary exchange has sold his liberty and services to another. It was too repugnant to all natural rights and feelings for any nation to permit the absolute and involuntary subjection of one fellow subject to another. The exemption bears a clear testimony

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mony to the common rights of Society. For it follows by a necessary inference, that a right, which every particular state considers as the privilege of its own subjects, reason and humanity consider as the right of all mankind.

2. The next great principle of Nature, the *Social affection*, branches out into affection for the Species, for the Sex, for kindred, &c. To this powerful principle society owes its existence as well as happiness. God said, "increase, and multiply, and replenish the earth." The Author of the "Researches" will not say that *any* system of Slavery, which is the source of a great Slave Trade, can be compatible with this command. He will not say that the advancement of the Species is promoted by *any* system of slave labour which exhausts the inhabitants of one quarter of the world to repair the consumption of another.\*

\* Dr. PRIESTLEY in his excellent Sermon on the Slave Trade, p. 5. says, "that in order to raise our sugar, and other West India commodities, perhaps *half a million* of persons are annually destroyed.—It is said, not less than a hundred thousand are annually exported from Africa. And some say, that before this ten are destroyed for one that is secured, and safely lodged on board the ships."

But

But the cruelties of Slavery are equally repugnant to "all the charities that soften Man," and all the relative duties, which result from them. The mutual duties of parent and child, the obligations of kindred, of friendship, of philanthropy are all dissolved by Slavery, by a state of existence, which is a degradation from every personal right, and moral responsibility. The Jews had a traditionary law,† which enabled a Man by a religious offering to discharge himself from the first duties of morality. Christ severely condemned them for thus *making the commandments of God of none effect* by their traditions. But how much more heinous a violation of God's commandments is Slavery? which does not merely afford an opportunity for voluntary evasion of duty, but is a compulsory annihilation of all duty.

It is not necessary to run through the circle of natural and moral duties to collect instances of their incompatibility with Slavery. It is sufficient to state against it that great prin-

† St. Matthew, Ch. XV. ver. 5, 6.



eiple of the law of Nature, the basis of all  
 social obligation, which enjoins us *to do as we  
 would be done unto*. "This is such a fundamen-  
 tal truth," says LOCKE, in his treatise on the  
*Conduct of the Understanding*, "that I think  
 by that alone one might without difficulty  
 determine all the cases and doubts in social  
 morality." If the present question admitted  
 of a doubt, the authority of LOCKE would be  
 sufficient encouragement to try the extent of  
 its correspondency with our Saviour's rule. But  
 this rule is so obviously adverse to the cruel-  
 ties of Slavery and the Slave Trade, that all  
 the sophistry and resource of interested argu-  
 ment cannot elude or disguise its meaning.  
 The Author of the Researches employs how-  
 ever the conclusion of his book to shew, that  
 "the golden maxim of doing as we would  
 be done unto, is so far from condemning  
 in the most distant manner the prosecution  
 of the Slave Trade, that when applied to  
 the case of Christian Masters and their  
 Slaves, it serves on the contrary to enforce  
 their reciprocal duties in their different  
 G "spheres

"spheres of life." Detestable perversion of the most benevolent of all precepts! Yet the Researcher evidently lays great stress on his discussion of this point. He does not introduce it, where he undertakes to shew that the Slave Trade is conformable to the principles of the law of Nature delineated in Scripture; but leaves it with his reader at parting to make the more effectual impression on his mind. It may not therefore be improper to enter a little minutely into the Researcher's management of this point, not because it is difficult or doubtful, but that we may see how much false reasoning was necessary to give colour to the impious inference, which he draws from it.

My first objection is to an inconsequence, which in fact invalidates the whole argument. He says, that our Saviour's injunction is so far from condemning the Slave Trade, that it enforces the reciprocal duties of Slave and Master: that is, it is so far from condemning the Slave Trade, that it enforces, what makes no part of the Slave Trade. The *reciprocal duties*

*duties of Slave and Master* do not commence, till the Slave is out of the hands of the Slave Merchant and Slave Factor, and ceases to be a mere bale of Merchandise. The abuse of terms, which the Researcher is perpetually guilty of in confounding the Slave Trade with Slavery has been before noticed.

In the next place, he talks of the *reciprocal* duties of Slave and Master. Reciprocal duties ! To have an adequate sense of the propriety of these terms, we must forget the humane provisions of the Hebrew law, as well as the liberal indulgences of Roman Slavery ; \* and think only of West Indian

\* Such as the Saturnalia, the frequent practise of enfranchisement &c. In spite of some instances of great cruelty, which have been recorded of Roman masters towards their Slaves, the very superior condition of the Roman slave in general over the West Indian is evident from many occupations of the former. The whole business of Roman agriculture was conducted by Slaves. They were employed in the cultivation of the land, not as *Cattle*, but as Husbandmen and Baillives to their Masters, and frequently as Tenants. Their domestic slaves were frequently distinguished for their intellectual attainments, and valued accordingly. In Atticus's family there were " *pueri litteratissimi, anagnostæ optimi, et plurimi librarii.*" (Corn. Nep. in Attic.) The *Anagnostæ* (says FORCELLINUS) dicti sunt servi, quos eruditi homines, et elegantioris

Slavery, of unlimited, uncompensated, brutal Slavery: and then judge what *reciprocity* there can be between absolute authority and absolute subjection; and how the divine rule of Christian charity can be said to enforce the reciprocal *duties* of the West Indian Slave and his Master. — But reciprocity is in-

tioris cultus studiosi habere solebant, ut inter cœnandum, aut cum libuisset, legerent doctorum hominum poemata, syntagmata, historias, pascendi ingenii gratia.

I do not recollect to have heard of any *such* employment as that of the Anagnostes amongst the West Indian Slaves, though more than one negro, under favorable circumstances, has given striking proofs of capacity for the elegant arts.

The general condition of Slaves both at Athens and Rome would afford a comparison in every way to the discredit of West Indian Slavery. Very unfavourable opinions have been formed of Roman and Athenian slavery from the *definitions* of Slavery and Slave, which their political writers have left us. That great ornament of human nature, the Philosopher of STAGIRA, has suffered in the judgement of many from some expressions on this subject in his treatise on Government. But he made ample compensation for any errors of *opinion* on this head, by an *act* of great humanity in providing by his will for the liberty and comfort of his Slaves. He directs, (as may be seen in DIOGENES LAERTIUS) that some of them should have their freedom immediately on his demise. One he enfranchises and portions out. The youngest of his Slaves he leaves under the protection of his heirs, that they might be brought up to a certain age, and then set free.

consistent



consistent with every degree of real Slavery. Between situations infinitely remote, such as absolute subjection and absolute authority, there can be no proportion; where there is no proportionable rank, there can be no relation; and where there is neither proportion nor relation, there can not be reciprocity.

However for the sake of trying his argument, we may allow him his own terms. "It is a Maxim in LOGIC, that *an argument, which proves too much, proves nothing*: the above argument [that as no person whatever would wish, that a fellow-creature should reduce him to the condition of a Slave, therefore no person whatever is to reduce a fellow-creature to that condition, founded on our Saviour's injunction] "is just such a one: for by the same manner of reasoning, one might equally conclude, contrary to the Law and the Prophets, and the doctrine of the Christian Religion, that not only Slavery, but every other kind of Subordination of one man  
" to

“ to another ought not to be suffered to con-  
 “ tinue in the world. The argument if con-  
 “ clusive in the former case, must be equal-  
 “ ly so in the latter : I enforce it thus :  
 “ All things whatsoever, says our blessed  
 “ Saviour, *ye would that Men should do to you,*  
 “ *do ye even so to them ; for this is the Law*  
 “ *and the Prophets :* whatsoever things there-  
 “ fore we would not that Men should do to  
 “ us, we are not even so to do to them ; but  
 “ every person would naturally wish not to  
 “ be controlled by a fellow-creature, not to  
 “ be under any subjection to him, but to  
 “ be absolutely master of his own actions :  
 “ no person therefore ought to keep a fellow  
 “ creature under any control or subjection  
 “ whatever.”

“ Such is the consequence of wresting the  
 “ natural and obvious meaning of the max-  
 “ ims of Scripture and applying them to  
 “ purposes inconsistent with Scripture itself.  
 “ The GOLDEN MAXIM of our divine Mas-  
 “ ter, comprehending in two words the  
 “ whole

“ whole perfection of a Christian, was cer-  
 “ tainly intended by him for all stations in  
 “ life, for of such was his Church to consist  
 “ to the end of Time : from the Throne to  
 “ the Cottage, in every walk of life, in bon-  
 “ dage or at liberty, every Christian is taught  
 “ and directed TO DO UNTO OTHERS, AS  
 “ HE WOULD BE DONE UNTO ; and by a  
 “ necessary consequence, NOT TO DO UNTO  
 “ OTHERS AS HE WOULD NOT BE DONE  
 “ UNTO : that is, every Christian is com-  
 “ manded to behave to his neighbour, in  
 “ whatever situation or circumstances in life  
 “ Providence may have placed them both,  
 “ just as he would wish his neighbour would  
 “ behave to him in his situation, were his  
 “ neighbour’s situation and circumstances his  
 “ own : so that, to apply the maxim to a  
 “ particular case (even the case in question,)  
 “ no Christian Master can be said *to do unto*  
 “ *others as he would be done unto*, unless he  
 “ behaves to his Slave with the same tender-  
 “ ness, justice and humanity, as he would  
 “ wish his Slave to behave to him, were the  
 “ Slave

" Slave his Master, and himself the Slave ;  
 " and upon the same principle no Slave can  
 " be said *to do unto others as he would be done*  
 " *unto*, unless he serves his Master with the  
 " same fidelity, submission, and respect,  
 " which he would expect from his master,  
 " were the latter his Slave and himself the  
 " Master."

Before we consider the inference, which  
 the Researcher draws from *his* application of  
 our Saviour's rule to Slavery, it is necessary  
 to remark the great abuse of terms in the  
 expression, " not only *Slavery*, but every  
 " *other* kind of subordination : " as if Slavery  
 could be called *one* of the degrees of civil sub-  
 ordination. It is profaning the term *subordi-*  
*nation* to apply it to such a state of existence  
 as Slavery. I say, state of existence, because  
 a state of Slavery is no state of civil society.  
 For a Slave, that is, one under unlimited, in-  
 voluntary, uncompensated subjection, without  
 rank, right, or privilege, is a non entity in  
 civil society. Whereas civil subordination  
 implies



implies relative rank with reciprocal rights, and privileges.

To infer then that if Slavery is unjust, therefore all subordination whatever is unjust, is to reason from violence and oppression to civil order, from involuntary subjection to voluntary submission, and cannot follow from our Saviour's rule without some great defect in the argument. The cause of Truth and Humanity is the same. It is impossible therefore that Logic, the art of discriminating truth from error, should separate truth from the interests of humanity. In the syllogism, which is drawn up to produce the abovementioned conclusion, it requires very little knowledge of that art to which the Researcher appeals, to perceive, that the conclusion is drawn through an *Assumption* which is inadmissible. The assumption that "every person would naturally wish not to be controlled by a fellow-creature, not to be under any subjection to him, but to be absolutely master of his own actions," is con-

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sistent

sistent only with a state of absolute liberty and incompatible with civil society. In just subordinations of civil society, whatever share of personal power is given up, more than an equivalent is acquired by the protection of the laws. In truth personal liberty is increased, as the adventitious inequalities of mankind are diminished by protecting the weaker from the insolence and oppression of the stranger, and by subjecting all orders of Men to the same common principles of justice. To claim therefore the right of natural and absolute liberty is to relinquish the protection of Society and Law; and consequently to wish for such an exemption is neither consistent with reason or interest. The assumption being inadmissible, the conclusion is necessarily defective. The application therefore of our Saviour's precept to Slavery and the Slave Trade still holds good; and proves only what it ought to prove, that as no person would wish to be reduced to Slavery and to continue so, therefore no person whatever should

should *reduce* a fellow creature to Slavery, or *keep* him in that condition. \*

But suppose the situations to exist of Master and Slave; and allow that then the precept "serves to enforce their *reciprocal* duties in "their different spheres of life," it will not at all benefit the cause of Slavery. The precept may injoin the submission of the Slave to his Master, but it does not injoin Slavery: it neither makes the situation nor justifies it. Submission is a virtue in the Slave; but the exercise of this virtue neither justifies the making of Slaves nor the *keeping* of them. *Offences must come*, and injustice will prevail, *but woe be to them by whom the offences come.* — It should not be forgotten, that, if the precept injoins submission in the Slave, it applies doubly to the Master; it injoins humanity in

\* When a Man is condemned to Slavery for any crime or crimes, he is deprived of the privileges of Society because he has violated its rights, but with this difference from West Indian Slavery, or Slavery in general, that he is the Slave of the State, and not of an individual.

the treatment of his Slaves, and condemns him for *keeping* them at all.

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In endeavouring to shew the inconsistency between Slavery, and the natural duties of Society deducible from Scripture, I have supposed an extreme degree of cruelty and misery annexed to the condition of a Slave. But some of the advocates of West Indian Slavery say that cruelty is not necessary to this Slavery ; that whatever be the condition of the African Slaves in the West Indies they are rescued from greater cruelties in their own country ; that they are happier than the poor of England ; and that they are happier in the West Indies, than at any time in their own country. I shall consider each of these assertions in their turn. In the first place it has been said, that the Slavery and the Slave Labour of the West Indies is not necessarily accompanied with cruelty. There certainly have been some good and generous individuals, who so far tempered the labour of their

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Plantations with humanity and attention to their Slaves, and softened the rigour of their condition by clemency and encouragement, that the abundant increase of the Slave families enabled the Proprietors to keep up the Stock employed in working the Plantations without the assistance of fresh Importation. \* And yet these Proprietors made great fortunes. There cannot be a stronger argument against the Slave Trade. For it is evident from the conduct of these Proprietors that the very reverse of humanity and clemency is the source of the Slave Trade; that the exercise of these virtues is perfectly consistent with the interest of the Slave Proprietors;

\* A committee of the Society instituted in London for the abolition of the *Slave Trade*, published Jan. 15. 1788. a Report of their proceedings, from which the following passage is an extract. "The Committee have several well authenticated accounts of estates in the West Indies, on which the number of negroes has been not only supported but increased, without any foreign supply, for several years: a circumstance, which affords as strong a proof as the nature of the case will admit, that a proper attention to the principles of humanity in their treatment would preclude the necessity of any further supplies from the coasts of Africa." See the whole Report in YOUNG's *Annals of Agriculture*, No. 49. Vol. IX. p. 85. and

and that the general practise of them through the West Indies would annihilate the Slave Trade.\*

But if it be not inconsistent with the interest of the Proprietors to be humane, why should they be cruel? This is a question very often and very confidently urged by the advocates of Slavery, but, as it seems, without reflecting that there is such a quality as *perversefness* in human nature, which sometimes, to gratify caprice or passion, impels men to act knowingly in opposition to their interests; and that men often *mistake* the means of promoting their interests, and pursue measures, which directly counteract their views. This

\* What reason then is there for a public act of the Legislature to abolish the Slave Trade, if private humanity will do it? This plain reason. Because, though, perhaps, extreme cruelty may not be a necessary concomitant of Slavery, any more than extreme vice is a necessary concomitant of human nature, yet unless experience would justify us in supposing that the example of a few humane and virtuous men would be sufficient to counteract the progress of cruelty and vice, there is little dependance to be made on any expectation that Slavery or the Slave Trade will ever be privately abolished.

might

might serve as a general answer to such a question ; but it must be added, that though humanity and indulgence is consistent with the acquisition of a *great* fortune, it is thought that severity of labour will sooner repay the purchase money of the Slaves, and, if it will not in the *end* produce a greater fortune, will more *quickly* satisfy the demands of cupidity or want.

But whatever may be the merit of some Proprietors in diminishing the miseries of Slavery, if no other circumstances of cruelty could be proved, if none of the horrid preliminaries of the Slave labour, either in the exportation from Africa, or in the probation of *seasoning* † in the West Indies could be ascertained, yet the mere privation of liberty, and compulsion to labour without compensation, is great cruelty and oppression. If no other facts could be al-

† The seasoning is said to expire, when the two or three first years of their servitude are completed. CLARKSON'S *Essay on Slavery* &c. p. 139. and RAMSAY'S *Answers to Objections* &c. Introd. p. 19.

leged,

leged, the involuntary submission of so many thousands to a few individuals implies, beyond a doubt, the employment of means the most tyrannical and oppressive to secure such subjection. \*

Indeed the general evidence of cruelty is so undeniable, that most of the apologists for Slavery attempt rather to extenuate the imputation than deny it. It has been said that if there was no market for the African captives, the greater part of them would be tortured and murdered by an implacable enemy ; and that it is an act of humanity to rescue them by purchase. The humanity of the motive, who can but smile at ? If life were an object to these captives, where is the humanity of rescuing a Man from immediate death to work him to death in a few years by the severity of labour ? † or to subject him to an earlier death

\* See note p. 46. and note † p. 111.

† It is generally allowed that 100,000 Slaves are annually exported from Africa, and that one *fifth* (20,000) of them die during the Voyage ; and one *fourth* of the Slaves imported into the West Indies (20,000) are supposed to perish in the *seasoning* : i. e. 40,000 lives are destroyed before one slave is fit for the



by the cruelties of the *seasoning*, or by the hardships of the voyage, which transports him from his country? But when we set such a value on this present, which we make him, of his life, are we not estimating the unconquerable feelings of savage nature by the enervated sensations of an European? If he dies by the hand of his enemy in battle or by torture, he dies *for* his country, he dies, perhaps, *in* his country, and is happy. If he lives in Slavery, he lives a life of toil and task-work and confinement, than which nothing can be more dissonant to his nature, with this consolation only, the fond persuasion, that death will one day restore him to his country and to his friends. The history of rude nations, which abounds with instances of the most ardent patriotism, and inflex-

the service of the West Indies. ROBERTSON says, that *two fifths* of the Slaves imported (32,000) are lost in the seasoning, which would increase the number of Slaves lost in the Voyage and the Seasoning to 52,000. The *whole* number of those imported may be said, with very few exceptions, to be *worked out* in fifteen years. See RAMSAY'S *Answers to Objections* &c. Introd. p. 19. BENEZET'S *Account of Guinea* p. 78. CLARKSON'S *Essay on Slavery* p. 129, and 139. ed. 2<sup>d</sup>.

ible contempt of death, \* will not suffer us to doubt, in the alternative of death or West Indian Slavery, which of the two an African would chuse,

The condition of the West Indian Slaves, some of the apologists of Slavery have endeavoured to recommend by asserting, that the Slaves are happier than the poor of our own country. However inadvertently this opinion may have been admitted by many, it could have originated only from the possession of inordinate authority, and insensibility to the blessings of a free country. Where the poor slaves are considered as mere brutes of burden, it is no wonder that their happi-

\* The Advocates of West Indian Slavery are unable to account for the indifference with which the Slaves in their public punishments encounter death, but from Stupidity. "It is needless to investigate the cause of this fact at the present moment; but negroes, for the most part, have so much want of mental exertion that they encounter death at the gallows with the same stupid insensibility and indifference as they would do a simple flagellation." *CONSIDERATIONS on the Emancipation of Negroes &c.* p. 10.

ness

ness should be measured by the regular supply of mere animal subsistence. But the miseries of cold and want are light when compared with the miseries of a mind weighed down by irresistible oppression. The hardships of poverty are every day endured by thousands in this country, for the sake of that liberty, which the advocates of Slavery think of so little value in their estimation of others happiness, rather than relinquish their *right* to *their own* time, *their own* hovel, and *their own* scanty property to become the pensioners of a parish. And yet an English poorhouse has advantages of indulgence and protection which are incompatible with the most humane system of West Indian slavery. To place the two situations of the English poor, and West Indian slaves, in any degree of comparison, is a defamation of our laws; and an insult to the genius of our country.

But if the West Indian Slaves are not happier than the poor of England, at least they are happier in the West Indies than in their

own country. — This is a very common assertion; but it is what, I believe, those who advance it, are very ill prepared to prove. It is more than probable that the abettors of such an assertion have seldom taken the pains to consider what *happiness* is, or what are its genuine sources. If we are judges of our own happiness, the different habits of uncivilized and civilized life make us very incompetent judges of an African's feelings. There are however some prominent propensities of savage nature, which are too strongly marked to be mistaken. Among others there is one so universally attested in ancient and modern times by poets, moralists, and historians, that it is impossible to doubt the truth of it; and that is an invincible love of their *country*. The *amor patriæ* of a savage is an instinctive passion for his country, more powerful, perhaps, because more simple, than the patriotism of an European. An European has a multitude of factitious wants to gratify. To the demands of nature are added a thousand objects of necessity, competence, or ambition. A native of Whidah or Angola has no wants, which



which his country cannot gratify ; no desires, which can carry him beyond it. In an European the love of his country is a mixed affection, dependent on various contingencies of personal accident and interest. In a savage it is simple, permanent, immutable.

If the exchange of Africa for the West Indies were by the voluntary migration of families and friends, we might reasonably suppose that the migration was undertaken on grounds well or ill founded of participating advantages denied to them in their own country. The loss of the *natale solum* we may conceive would be mitigated by possessing uninterrupted all the endearments of friendship and affection, the most powerful attractions, that bind men to their country. But West Indian Slavery presents no such alleviation of their loss. The West Indian Slaves are not voluntary and friendly associates of the same neighbourhood or country. They are inhabitants of different nations and tribes, subjected, for the most part, to slavery by war  
or

or rapine, and unfitted for the exercise of friendly and social affections by the rancour of unsatisfied revenge. Instead of enjoying the comforts of family endearments, they are torn from their parents, from their wives and children, from their nearest and tenderest affections. Instead of the hopes of participating advantages to compensate the loss of their country, all hope of personal advantage is extinguished the moment they enter the Slave vessel. We may justly apply to every vessel employed in this inhuman traffic the inscription, which DANTE has given to the gates of Hell in his *Inferno* :

Per me si va nella citta dolente ;

Per me si va nell' eterno dolore ; —

Lasciate ogni speranza, voi ch' entrate.\*

Can it be possible then, without one circumstance of friendship or affection, of interest or hope to alleviate the miseries of Slavery,

\* Through me is the way to the city of pain ;

Through me is the way to eternal misery ; —

Abandon every hope, ye that enter.

that

that the wretched colonists of the West Indies should ever forget their own country? that they should be happier under the severe exactions of task-work, and the lash of an unmerciful driver, than in the ease and indolence of savage life, and the enjoyment of their native freedom? If a Slave could be supposed *capable* of judging of *his own* happiness, and were asked which situation he thinks the happier, the West Indies or his own country, a life of such slavery or death, what his answer would be we may in some measure collect from the sentiments of the Roman slave.

“ A Roman knight saw his slave weeping,  
 “ and asked him if he wept because he was  
 “ a slave. No, he replied, but because *I once*  
 “ *was free*. He that loves freedom, said  
 “ the liberal Republican, should have been  
 “ born a Roman. But as he was not, a Ro-  
 “ man can make him free.” † The Romans considered no man by nature exempt from Slavery, except he was born with the rights of a Roman citizen. Though in the highest

† *Elements of the Science of Ethics, on the principles of natural philosophy.* p. 183. I refer to Mr. BRUCE's book, and adopt  
 his

degree jealous of their own liberties, they had not, even in the best periods of their history, enlarged their views of human nature enough to acknowledge the general rights of Mankind. The world had not then been blessed with the light of that benevolent religion, which in its full time is to become the religion of all mankind. Yet the conduct of this generous heathen master holds out a lesson of humanity and justice even to Christians and to Britons.

I am not conscious of having omitted any reason urged by the Apologists of Slavery against the common opinion of the misery of the West Indian Slaves, and the cruelty of their condition; and from those reasons which have been stated there appears nothing to prevent our concluding that Slavery is inconsistent with

his words, because I do not recollect any ancient authority for this fact. But I can venture to refer the reader to the same Elements, without fear of disappointing him, for many just and new views in the History and Theory of Ethics deduced from the various phenomena of human nature with great clearness and accuracy.

*the*



*the will of God*, because inconsistent with "the natural duties of Society deducible from "Scripture," or, as the Researcher expresses himself, "the principles of the law of Nature "delineated in the sacred writings:" That it is inconsistent with those duties and principles, because it degrades the human species from its original and natural preeminence in the order of creation, and because it obstructs the progress of civil Society, and the exercise of the benevolent affections: That it cannot be defended without perverting the common principles of right and wrong; without removing the distinction between unlawful oppression and just subordination; and, of course, establishing principles the most unworthy of our Species, and most inimical to the interests of virtue and public liberty.

From all that has been advanced result the following (I think, unquestionable) inferences: That Slavery is unjustifiable even under the most humane treatment; but, with circumstances of cruelty, that it is highly criminal

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minal and wicked ; especially in Christians, and, above all, in Christians of a free government. — Consequently that the Trade which extends the practise of what is criminal and wicked, cannot be less criminal, and may be much more ; that the profits of such Trade, whatever may be its national consequence, do not lessen its injustice and criminality ; and that such Trade therefore ought not to have the deliberate sanction of a free Christian nation, but ought to be abolished.

In one word, that I may recur to the before mentioned criterion \* it is sufficient to say that Slavery and the Slave Trade ought to be abolished, because they are inconsistent with *the will of God*. A Machiavellian in politics or commerce may attempt to establish different principles for the regulation of States, and the actions of individuals : but however often those principles may be found at variance in the political conduct of States, it will be difficult to find any exception in that

\* P. 11. 43.

Code of justice, which is to be the ultimate criterion of all human actions. Of the commercial advantages and disadvantages of Slavery, and the Slave Trade, few perhaps are competent to judge: but of their natural and scriptural illegality, on grounds infinitely superior to all commercial considerations, (as much superior as the soul is to the body; as the interests of eternity are to the concerns of a day,) every one may judge, that can feel for his fellow-creatures; every one may determine that read the Scriptures.

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Indeed the conclusions against Slavery and the Slave Trade from the law of Nature and Scripture are so obvious, that none, but men the most interested in the profits of the Slave Trade, could long be deceived by the most artful misrepresentations of the laws of God and Nature. There are however some who execrate the cruelties imputed to West India Slavery, but deny the imputation; others admit the charge, but contend for the miti-

gation of Slavery rather than the abolition; while others, without extenuating the cruelty of Slavery, or wishing for any material mitigation, consider the arguments against it from religion and morality, as of secondary concern, which must give way to their ideas of public utility.

To prove the sum of oppression, cruelty, and misery, resulting from Slavery, it is not necessary to establish a minute detail of particular facts. It may be said, and probably with truth, that many of the particular imputations, which have been objected to West Indian Slavery, are erroneous, and many perhaps absolutely groundless. In what *degrees* of cruelty and inhumanity the Slave labour is carried on, is not more difficult, than it is immaterial, minutely to ascertain. The aggregate of these cruelties is sufficiently established by one undeniable proof, the annual consumption of Slaves, which is the support of the Slave Trade. It is said, that

an



an hundred thousand \* Slaves are annually exported from Africa for the West Indies. Surely it is of very little consequence, whether all the particular instances of severity and cruelty imputed to Slavery can be substantiated or not, as long as the annual destruction of so many thousand men is acknowledged; a fact, in which cruelty and oppression are indelibly marked, by such crimson evidence, as cannot be washed out by all the waters of the Atlantic.

To think that a great Trade should depend on such inhuman tyranny! That a great revenue should be raised from the annual consumption of so many thousand men! That a great revenue should be ground out of the misery of our fellow-creatures, who have neither share nor interest in the profits of their labour! and that such a Trade should not only be permitted, but contended for, in a free

\* SHARP's Appendix to his *Representation of the Injustice and dangerous Tendency of tolerating Slavery in England*, p. 27. Lond. 1771.—Dr. PRIESTLEY's Sermon, quoted above, p. 51. See also note † p. 68.

Christian country ! a country too, that prides itself, and justly prides itself, on possessing more genuine liberty than any other country ever enjoyed.

Such oppression, and such traffic, should be swept away at one blow. Such horrid offences against God and nature can admit of no medium. Yet some of the more moderate Apologists of Slavery think that a medium may be adopted. They think that Slavery ought not to be abolished, but *modified* and *meliorated* by good laws and regulations. It is well observed by CICERO, \* that,  
 “ Incidunt multæ sæpe causæ, quæ conturbent animos *utilitatis* specie ; non cum hoc deliberetur, relinquendane sit honestas  
 “ propter utilitatis magnitudinem, (nam hoc quidem improbum est) † sed illud, *possitne*  
 “ id, quod utile videatur, fieri non turpiter.”

\* De Off. Lib. III. c. 10.

† The author of *CONSIDERATIONS on the Emancipation of Negroes, &c.* thinks otherwise. He says, *relinquenda est honestas propter utilitatis magnitudinem.* See the *Postscript* to these *Considerations*.

That

That it is impossible for Slavery *fieri non tur-*  
*piter*, may in some measure appear from what  
 has been \* already said against the probability  
 that any permanent good effects can arise  
 from new laws and regulations for the benefit  
 of the Slaves. The regulations, which the  
*Apologist for Negro Slavery* proposes as still  
 necessary, † and the hardships and severe la-  
 bour, which it is allowed by the author of  
*Considerations on the Emancipation of Negroes*  
 that the Slaves still endure, shew that all the  
 laws hitherto made have produced little or no  
 benefit to the Slaves. But there are many rea-  
 sons why it is very improbable that such pro-  
 visions should produce any effectual benefit.  
 The power which is exercised over the Slaves,  
 and the severe coercion necessary to keep an  
 immense superiority of numbers in absolute  
 obedience to a few, and restrain them from  
 insurrection, is incompatible with equity or  
 humanity, and is obnoxious to abuses, which

\* In the Remark on Dat. XI. of the *Scriptural Researches*,  
 and afterwards in note p. 46.

† See CLARKSON's Essay on Slavery, Pref. p. xix.

no legal regulations can counteract. The power which a West Indian master has over his Slave, it is impossible for the generality of masters or managers not to abuse; it is too great to be intrusted in the hands of any men subject to human passions and infirmities. The best principles, and most generous natures, are perverted by the influence of passion and habit.

It is no objection to this reasoning, that some Plantations have been managed with so much humanity and tenderness, (that is, in comparison with the usual treatment of the Slaves; and as far as an inhuman condition will admit of the exercise of these virtues) that the plantation stock has been kept up for many years without fresh importation from Africa. In considering the condition of West Indian Slavery, I speak of the general management; and what that is, may be collected from the prevailing maxim, that it is more beneficial to buy Slaves than to breed.



breed.\* If it were possible that new regulations could introduce into all the plantations the same humane management, as was observed in the plantations alluded to, the Slave Trade would lose one of its strongest arguments, the plea of necessity: for there would be no demand for fresh Slaves from Africa; and the Trade would, of course, be abolished. But there is too much reason for thinking, that the abolition of the Slave Trade ought not to be left to the uncertain operation of *humane* provisions for mitigating, what is in its very nature *inhuman*; and to the improbable compatibility of things so heterogeneous, as *Slavery* and *good laws*.

In the colonies of an arbitrary government, where the *lex regia* has an absolute controul over the master proportionate to the master's dominion over his Slaves, the Slaves may better depend on the protection of new regulations. The more arbitrary the government of the parent state, the better enabled is the governor of the colony to enforce the full extent of any regulation;

gulation ; and, where occasion may require, to supply by his own authority the deficiency of a written law. But in the *British* plantations, such exercise of authority is illegal, and would not be endured. There are many acts of oppression in the conduct of individuals, which are not cognizable by *British* law, and which the *British* magistrate cannot prevent. Mr. RAMSAY's experience in the West Indies ought to make his opinion decisive, when he says, that " except in a  
 " very few points, it is almost impossible for  
 " law to come between a Master and his  
 " Slave. A cruel man can tease or waste his  
 " Slave in a thousand ways that law cannot  
 " check, nor authority reach. The Danes,  
 " indeed, have an effectual method in their  
 " islands, which has been enforced in several  
 " particular instances. The governor divests  
 " a cruel master of the management of his  
 " property, and sets humane people over  
 " it." \* It is allowed even by the author of

\* *Objections to the Abolition of the Slave Trade, with Answers,*  
 p. 66.

*Considerations on the Emancipation of Negroes,*  
 &c. that "the French Slaves are certainly  
 "much better circumstanced than the Eng-  
 "lish."† The celebrated writer on *the*  
*Wealth of Nations* admits this difference in  
 the treatment of the French and English  
 Slaves, and accounts for it on the same  
 grounds as Mr. RAMSAY, that is, from the  
 difference of civil government in the two  
 parent states. The consideration is of so  
 much consequence to the question respecting  
 the toleration of Slavery in any part of the  
*British* empire, that I make no scruple of  
 quoting the words of the great politician at  
 length. "In the good management of their  
 "Slaves the French planters, I think it is  
 "generally allowed, are superior to the Eng-  
 "lish. The law, so far as it gives some  
 "weak protection to the Slave against the  
 "violence of his master, is likely to be better  
 "executed in a colony where the govern-  
 "ment is in a great measure arbitrary, than  
 "in one where it is altogether free. In

† P. 41.

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"every

“ every country where the unfortunate law  
 “ of Slavery is established, the magistrate,  
 “ when he protects the Slave, intermeddles  
 “ in some measure in the management of  
 “ the private property of the master; and,  
 “ in a free country, where the master is per-  
 “ haps either a member of the colony assem-  
 “ bly, or an elector of such a member, he  
 “ dare not do this but with the greatest cau-  
 “ tion and circumspection. The respect  
 “ which he is obliged to pay to the master,  
 “ renders it more difficult for him to protect  
 “ the Slave. But in a country where the  
 “ government is in a great measure arbitrary,  
 “ where it is usual for the magistrate to in-  
 “ termeddle even in the management of the  
 “ private property of individuals, and to  
 “ send them, perhaps, a lettre de cachet if  
 “ they do not manage it according to his  
 “ liking, it is much easier for him to give  
 “ some protection to the Slave; and com-  
 “ mon humanity naturally disposes him to  
 “ do so. The protection of the magistrate  
 “ renders the Slave less contemptible in the  
 “ eyes



" eyes of his master, who is thereby induced  
 " to consider him with more regard, and to  
 " treat him with more gentleness. Gentle  
 " usage renders the Slave not only more  
 " faithful, but more intelligent, and there-  
 " fore, upon a double account, more useful.  
 " He approaches more to the condition of a  
 " free servant, and may possess some degree  
 " of integrity and attachment to his master's  
 " interest, virtues which frequently belong  
 " to free servants, but which never can be-  
 " long to a Slave, who is treated as Slaves  
 " commonly are in countries where the mas-  
 " ter is perfectly free and secure.

" That the condition of a Slave is better  
 " under an arbitrary than under a free go-  
 " vernment, is, I believe, supported by the  
 " history of all ages and nations. In the  
 " Roman history, the first time we read of  
 " the magistrate interposing to protect the  
 " Slave from the violence of his master, is  
 " under the emperors. When Vedius Pol-  
 " lio, in the presence of Augustus, ordered  
 " one

“ one of his Slaves, who had committed a  
 “ flight fault, to be cut into pieces and  
 “ thrown into his fish pond in order to feed  
 “ his fishes, the emperor commanded him,  
 “ with indignation, to emancipate immedi-  
 “ ately, not only that Slave, but all the  
 “ others that belonged to him. Under the  
 “ republick no magistrate could have had  
 “ authority enough to protect a Slave, much  
 “ less to punish the master.” \*

Whatever laws therefore might be made  
 for the purpose of mitigating and modifying  
 Slavery in the *British* Colonies, we have no  
 reason to think that they would contradict  
 all former experience, by producing any per-  
 manent effects of much consequence to the  
 general condition of the Slaves. In truth,  
 Law and Slavery are contradictory terms. If  
 laws prevail, that is, such laws as ought to  
 be in force in every part of the British em-  
 pire, Slavery cannot exist. If Slavery, how-

\* Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Na-  
 tions, Vol. II. p. 394, 395. Edit. 1784. 8vo.

ever modified, is suffered to exist, British law cannot be in force. Why then attempt to *modify*, what is, in its very principle, inhuman, unchristian, and inconsistent with British law, and the spirit of our constitution? and which, however its concomitant circumstances might be diminished, could never be rendered not inhuman, not unchristian, not unconstitutional. If justice to our nature, to our religion, and our country, demand the sacrifice, why should an act of such accumulated duty be done by halves? Why not rather by one generous effort\* of public virtue cut off all occasion of inhumanity and oppression, with all the pernicious effects of Slavery on the Slave, the Master, and the State. †

\* Not by immediate emancipation, but by an act of the Legislature, which should prohibit all further importation of Slaves into the British islands from the coast of Africa, or from any other quarter; and abolish Slavery, after a limited period, in every part of the British dominions.

† See *L'esprit des Loix*, L. 15. c. 5. Of the extensive and destructive consequences of Slavery, see also Mr. HARGRAVE, in his *Argument in the Case of Sommersett, the Negro*, and Mr. MILLAR, *On the Origin of the Distinction of Ranks*, p. 396.

• The remains which are found of domestic Slavery, in the  
“ American

There are however many who think it is in vain to oppose the established practise of Slavery and the Slave Trade by reasons derived from morality or Religion : that all complaints of cruelty and oppression will avail nothing against the pleas of commercial and national interest. If Slavery and the Slave Trade are *useful* to the nation ; if they are advantageous to its revenue and commercial interests ; it is in vain, they say, to expect that the voice of nature, or the authority of religion should effect the abolition. There are others who neither extenuate the cruelty, injustice and immorality of Slavery, nor propose any material mitigation ; and

“ American Colonies, and in some European nations, says Mr.  
 “ HUME, (in his *Essay on the Populousness of Ancient Nations*)  
 “ would never create a desire of rendering it more universal.  
 “ The little humanity, commonly observed in persons, accustomed, from their infancy, to exercise so great authority  
 “ over their fellow-creatures, and to trample upon human  
 “ nature, were sufficient alone to disgust us with that un-  
 “ bounded dominion. Nor can a more probable reason be  
 “ assigned for the severe, I might say, barbarous manners of  
 “ ancient times, than the practise of domestic slavery ; by  
 “ which every man of rank was rendered a petty tyrant, and  
 “ educated amidst the flattery, submission, and low debasement  
 “ of his slaves.”

yet



yet think that the abolition of Slavery and the Slave Trade is not only not to be *wished* or *expected*, but that it *ought* not to be allowed. "To abolish Slavery and the Slave Trade may be humane and virtuous; it may be incumbent on us as men, and as Christians, but it would be against the interest of the nation." And can any thing be really and ultimately useful to England, \* which is inconsistent

\* CICERO says that whatever is inconsistent with humanity and virtue, cannot be useful to individuals or to states, and reprobates in very strong terms any attempt to separate the *utile* and *honestum*. That great statesman, in his excellent manual of moral duty, says "*Utilitatis specie in republica sapissime peccatur; ut in Corinthi disturbance nostris. Durius etiam Athenienses, qui sciverunt, ut Æginetis, qui classe valebant, pollices præciderentur: nimis enim imminabat, propter propinquitatem, Ægina Piræo: sed nihil, quod crudele, utile: est enim naturæ hominum, quam sequi debemus, maxime inimica crudelitas.*" (De Offic. III. 11.) In the following chapter he urges his principle with greater force. "*Maneat ergo, quod turpe sit, id nunquam esse utile; ne tum quidem cum id, quod utile putes, adipiscere. Hoc enim ipsum, utile putare quod turpe sit, calamitosum est.*" And afterwards he considers the admitting of such a maxim as that any thing can be expedient or useful, which is not consistent with justice and honour, as the source of every species of fraud and crime. "*Sic enim cogitans, EST ISTUD QUIDEM HONESTUM, VERUM HOC EXPEDIT, res a natura copulatas audebit errore divellere; qui fons est fraudum, maleficiorum, scelerum omnium.*" L. III. c. 17. Though it was not the

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with its political constitution? to Christians, which offends against the very genius and spirit of their religion? or to men, which violates the first duties of human nature?—It is impossible to believe (however industriously this doctrine has been circulated) that such sentiments can be general: and we ought to have much better hopes of the deliberate judgement of a whole people. If indeed the event of the question were left to a body of Slave merchants, some apprehension might reasonably be formed about its issue. But the cause of Slavery and the Slave Trade is no longer a subject of mere private speculation. This cause of human nature is brought before the tribunal of that nation, which has always been celebrated for

object of these Considerations to enter upon the *commercial* impolicy of Slavery, and Slave labour, I shall (in the *Postscript*) confirm the sentiments of the great Roman statemen by the opinions of three celebrated political writers of the present day, SMITH, MILLAR and YOUNG, on the *commercial disadvantages* of Slave labour; upon whose authority Slavery and the Slave Trade may be placed, even in a commercial view, amongst those political errors, which CICERO says are frequently committed upon false ideas of utility.

and

its mercy; † the cause of liberty is submitted to the arbitration of that country, whose freedom and happiness are founded on the general rights of mankind. And we cannot doubt that the great principles of political justice, which form the basis of our constitution, and which ought to come home to the breast of every British subject, will have their full weight in the deliberations of those august assemblies, which are to decide on a cause, that involves the purity of our holy religion, and the credit and consistency of our national character. It should be observed, in justice to the advocates of West Indian Slavery and the Slave Trade, that though they have contended for those usages in opposition to *Morality* and *Religion*, they have not attempted

† It is a very general, and seems to be a well founded opinion, that the Slaves are treated much more cruelly in the British Islands, than in others. This *abuse* of Slavery, as it is called, is a paradox as inconsistent with the general character of our nation, as the permission of Slavery in *any mode* is with the principles of our law and constitution. The reason, why the Slaves are treated with greater cruelty in the British colonies, than in the French and others, has been mentioned above, amongst other reasons against the probability of any effectual and permanent *mitigation* of West Indian Slavery.

to

to justify the absolute inconsistency of such usages with *the laws of their country*. The laws of England place all, who are under their protection, in a situation, which distinguishes them from the inhabitants of every other country. The subjects of such a government, when they knowingly and deliberately support a system of cruelty and oppression, which violates every principle of civil liberty, are guilty of the most aggravated injustice; and incur an inconsistency, which peculiarly affects *their* duty and their honour. To prove a point, so obvious in itself, does not require much detail; yet a few observations on such circumstances in the progress of our law and constitution, as more immediately concern the question of Slavery and the Slave Trade, may not be improper.

“ One nation there is in the world, says “ Montesquieu,\* which has LIBERTY for the “ direct *end* of its constitution.” This great privilege and boast, is allowed us by the envy

\* L'Esprit des Loix, L. xi. c. 5.

and



and admiration of all other countries. It is an interesting circumstance to observe, in the progress of our constitution, how, through all the public disorders and commotions with which the nation has been agitated in different periods, this leading principle has given direction to the current of affairs, and terminated them in provisions for the general security of the subject. † It is not less interesting to see, how on all occasions where this principle could act, the sense of the nation and the decision of its tribunals have concurred gradually to eradicate from this island every degree of power and coercion, which appeared hostile to civil liberty. Under the influence of such a principle, it was to be expected that the involuntary subjection of one man to the service of another could not long be tolerated, to any extent, especially after the establishment of English liberty by MAGNA CARTA. The

† See this excellently explained by De Lolme, who compares the revolutions of other countries with those of England. *Constit. Eng.* B. II. c. xv, p. 324. ed. 4th.

provisions made for the security of the subject, at that ever memorable convention, extended to the lowest orders of the people. The Villein, or Slave of those days, acquired a certain degree of private property by a clause which secured him from the forfeiture of his implements of tillage: on which provision DE LOLME observes, in his usual interesting manner, that “ for the first time perhaps in  
 “ the annals of the world, a civil war was terminated by making stipulations in favour  
 “ of those unfortunate men, to whom the  
 “ avarice and lust of dominion inherent in  
 “ human nature, continued, over the greatest part of the earth, to deny the common  
 “ rights of mankind.” The different causes which operated to the gradual abolition of villenage are specified by Mr. BARRINGTON,\* Mr. SHARP,† and Mr. HARGRAVE.‡ The cause most deserving notice, as most ex-

\* *Observations on the Statutes*, p. 304, &c. ed. 4th.

† *Argument on the Case of James Somerset, a Negro*, p. 29, &c. ed. 2d 1775.

‡ Part iii. of his *Representation of the Injustice, and dangerous Tendency of tolerating Slavery in England*. London, 1769.

pressive of the spirit of the English law, was  
 the uniform discouragement of villenage by  
 the courts of justice, in throwing the *onus pro-*  
*bardi* on the lord, and presuming every thing  
 in favour of the Villein's right to liberty,  
 whether the Villein was plaintiff, or defend-  
 ant. Villenage at last became extinct in the  
 beginning of James the First's reign. At  
 the same time, and for some years before, it  
 was held, that the privileges of liberty en-  
 joyed by English subjects were not confined  
 to natives of the island, but that every alien  
 inhabitant of the island was under the pro-  
 tection of the laws; and therefore, that even  
 a foreign Slave, when he landed in England,  
 became free. This appears from the case  
 of a Russian Slave, whom one *Cartwright*  
 brought into England in the reign of Queen  
 ELIZABETH. The master insisted upon ex-  
 ercising the same absolute authority over the  
 Slave, as before his arrival; *and would scourge*  
*him; for which he was questioned; and it was*  
*resolved that the air of England was too pure*  
*for*

*for a Slave to breathe in.\** Consistently with with this resolution, the enfranchisement of a Slave has long been considered by some of the ablest lawyers of this country, as a right resulting from the protection of our laws. But the celebrated judgement in the Court of King's Bench, † in the case of SOMMERSETT, the Negro, defined the power of our law still more expressly, by deciding, that a master not only loses all power over the personal liberty and property of his Slave, as soon as he arrives in Britain, but that he cannot recover his former power over the servant; as he cannot send the servant out of the island against his will.‡ The sum of Mr. HAR-

\* BARRINGTON on the Statutes, p. 312. and HARGRAVE'S Argument, p. 50.

† Feb. 1772.

‡ It is the opinion of the very learned author of *Observations on the Statutes*, (p. 312.) that the judgement of the Court determined only, *that a master hath no right to send a Negro Slave out of England to be sold*: he doubts whether the law of England goes so far as to emancipate him. But in Mr. HARGRAVE'S argument, the illegality of sending the Negro out of England is deduced from the illegality of any duress in England, the unlawfulness of any restraint on the personal liberty of the Negro. Judge BLACKSTONE (*Comm. B. 1. c. 14*) considers the right of a master to his Negro's service in England,



GRAVE's argument, who was one of the Counsel for the Negro, is "not merely that  
 " negroes become free on being brought into

land, as depending on the right's having been fully acquired by a civil obligation between the Master and the Negro. But such obligation was never even pretended between the West Slaves and their masters. How solicitous the learned Judge was to leave a clear testimony against the exercise of any arbitrary and illegal power over the Negro, appears from the difference of his language in the same passage of different editions. The passage just referred to, in the first editions stood thus: "With regard to any right, which the master may have  
 " acquired to the perpetual service of John or Thomas, this  
 " will remain exactly in the same state as before: for this is  
 " no more than the same state of subjection for life, which  
 " every apprentice submits to for the space of seven years, or  
 " sometimes for a longer term.—Hence too it follows, that  
 " the infamous and unchristian practice of withholding baptism  
 " from Negro servants, lest they should thereby gain their liberty, is totally without foundation, as well as without excuse. The law of Eng'and acts upon general and extensive  
 " principles: it gives liberty, rightly understood, that is, protection, to a Jew, a Turk, or a Heathen, as well as to  
 " those who profess the true religion of Christ; and it will not  
 " dissolve a civil obligation between master and servant, on  
 " account of the alteration of faith in either of the parties: but  
 " the Slave is entitled to the same protection in England before, as after, baptism; and whatever service the Heathen  
 " Negro owed to his American master, the same is he bound  
 " to render, when brought to England and made a Christian."

In the edition of 1783, his opinion is guarded by the additional terms, which in this extract I have printed in Italics.  
 " With regard to any right, which the master may have *law-*

*fully*

" this country, but that the law of England  
 " confers the *gift of liberty intire and unin-*  
 " *cumbered* ; not in *name* only, but *really* and  
 " *substantially* ; and consequently, that Mr.  
 " Steuart cannot have the least right over  
 " Sommerfett the negro, either in the *open*  
 " character of a slave, or in the *disguised* one  
 " of an ordinary servant." †

The learned and luminous deduction of  
 MR. HARGRAVE's argument requires no ad-  
 ditional evidence. The best proof of its va-  
 lidity is the unanimous judgement of the

" *fully* acquired to the perpetual service of John or Thomas,  
 " this will remain in exactly the same state as before."—" And  
 " whatever service the Heathen Negro owed, *of right*, to his  
 " American master, *by general not by local laws*, the same  
 " (*whatever it be*) is he bound to render, when brought to Eng-  
 " land, and made a Christian." It appears then from this  
 passage, that a master can have no right to the perpetual ser-  
 vice of his Negro in England, unless it has been first lawfully  
 acquired ; and that it can be lawfully acquired only by general  
 law, that is by the civil obligation of mutual agreement be-  
 tween the Master and the Negro, and not by any local law of  
 the West Indies or elsewhere. The learned writer had be-  
 fore said, (p. 127. ed. 1783) " that a Slave or a Negro, the  
 " moment he lands in England, falls under the protection of  
 " the laws, and so far becomes a freeman ; though the mas-  
 " ter's right to his service may *possibly* still continue : " we  
 now see to what limitations this possibility is subject.

† *Argument*, p. 78.

Court,

Court, by which *Sommersett* was discharged. The case deserves the more notice in an inquiry into the legality of Slavery in the West Indies, because all the arguments in favour of the Negro's right to liberty in Britain are convertible into proofs of the injustice and illegality of Slavery in the British colonies. \*

“The law of England, says BLACKSTONE,† [which acts upon the general and extensive principles of natural law,] abhors, and will not  
 “endure the existence of Slavery within this  
 “nation : so that when an attempt was made  
 “to introduce it, by statute, 1 Edw. VI. c. 3.  
 “which ordained, that all idle vagabonds  
 “should be made slaves, and fed upon bread,

\* *Humana natura, in libertatis causa, favorem semper, magis quam in aliis causis, deprecetur. — Angliæ jura, in omni casu, libertati dant favorem. FORTESCUE de laudibus legum Angliæ, c. 47. and 42.* How much the humanity of the common law of England supported by the uniform and successful efforts of our ancient lawyers contributed to the suppression of the old slavery of villenage, Mr. SHARP has shewn in the copious information, which he has collected in his book before quoted, Part IVth. and Mr. HARGRAVE in his argument, p. 29, &c. The Advocates of *Sommersett* have obtained equal honour in opposing the revival of domestic slavery in this country under any form.

† Commentaries, B. 1. ch. 14. p. 424. ed. 1783.

“ water, or small drink, and refuse meat ;  
 “ should wear a ring of iron round their necks,  
 “ arms, or legs ; and should be compelled by  
 “ beating, chaining, or otherwise, to perform  
 “ the work assigned them, were it never so  
 “ vile ; the spirit of the nation could not brook  
 “ this condition, even in the most abandoned  
 “ rogues ; and therefore this statute was re-  
 “ pealed in two years afterwards.” The law  
 of England recognizes no Slavery but that of  
 the ancient villenage, which has long been ex-  
 tinct, and cannot be revived, even consistently  
 with the laws of villenage itself. The term  
 of *Slave* indeed is not absolutely unknown to  
 our law, as appears from statute 1 Edw. VI.  
 just quoted ; but unfortunately for the cause  
 of Slavery it is worse than unknown, as it  
 was expunged from the law by the repeal  
 which afterwards took place, and rendered  
 infamous by the general abhorrence of the  
 nation. “ The law of England, says the  
 “ learned Advocate of Sommerfett, emanci-  
 “ pates a negro as soon as he comes into this  
 “ Island,



“ Island, because it disallows the introduction  
 “ of Slavery: it prohibits the commencement  
 “ of slavery in England, because it considers  
 “ its operation as dangerous and destructive  
 “ to the whole community.” †

Now all the consequences of every kind to be dreaded from the Introduction of Slavery into England, must follow in a proportionate degree from the permission of Slavery in the West Indies: consequences which immediately concern the colonies, but ultimately the parent state. I do not here mention the inefficiency of extorted labour compared with the work of freemen, nor the other commercial disadvantages of Slavery noticed in the Postscript: I refer only to the insecurity of the Islands, as a part of the British Empire, in time of war and danger; and the probable effects of the Slave system on the British inhabitants of the West Indies, which, when they return to England, the air even of this land of liberty may not be able to dissipate.

† MR. HARGRAVE'S *Argument*, p. 77 and 69.

In the time of War the Slaves cannot but afford great cause of alarm for the security of the Islands. The privation of liberty, the severity of labour, the want of interest in the very produce of their own toils, their total indifference to the general property of the Islands, and the desire of revenge for the cruelties and miseries they suffer, must prepare them to seize the first favourable opportunity of insurrection. \* So far therefore the *external* interests of England are concerned. But the *internal* happiness of this country may ultimately be involved. There are upon an average between forty and fifty thousand whites in the British West India Islands. The greater part of these may return to England, and many perhaps with that opulence which may give them considerable political rank in this country. But if we allow on this occasion, what is allowed on all others, the force of long habit, there is too much reason to

\* "Lacedæmon," says MR. MITFORD in his classical History of Greece, Vol. 1. p. 199. "was oftener in danger of utter subversion from its slaves than from foreign enemies."

appre-

apprehend that the long exercise of absolute dominion, and the contagion of laws in the highest degree inconsistent with British law,† will harden the generality of minds against the impression of those general and extensive principles of natural justice, upon which the law of England is founded. The blessings of civil liberty, and the general rights of mankind, what interest or sympathy can they excite in a resident Slave-holder, who, though not immediately exercised in the cruelties of Slavery, is connected with the despotism, by which they are authorized, and the system, which makes them necessary. The Spartan children, it is said, collected lessons of sobriety from the degrading and contemptible circumstances of drunkenness, to which their Slaves were occasionally reduced as spectacles to quicken the sense of shame, and of regard for temperance and honour. And it is probable that the most ardent love of Liberty and regard for the happy constitution of this country might

† See below, p. 110. note †, and p. 111. note †.

be excited by a view of the cruelties and inhumanities of West Indian Slavery. † But a resident Master of the Plantations, (whatever his opinion may be on reflection,) can hardly fail to lose the natural compunction of those feelings. Scenes of permitted cruelty and oppression must pass before his eyes too often, to *quicken* the energies of philanthropy and justice. Besides the reciprocal rights and duties of civil Society are lost in the infinite distance between the Master and the Slave. It is almost impossible for the best natural dispositions not to be perverted by the occurrences of such a situation. It must demand in a Slave Master the exertion of the sublimest virtue to retain, under such habits, that sensibility of principle for the general good, which should characterise the lover of his

† " I shall not now enter upon the question whether the Slavery of the Negroes be agreeable to the laws of nature or not; though it seems extremely hard they should be reduced to serve and toil for the benefit of others, without the least advantage to themselves. Happy Britannia! where Slavery is never known; where liberty cheers every misfortune." *History of Jamaica*, quoted by BENEZET in his *Account of Guinea*, p. 68.

country



country, the representative of his fellow citizens, the guardian of their rights and liberties. How far these apprehensions are countenanced by experience, others must determine: I speak only of probabilities founded on consequences, which have been generally allowed to result from Slavery.\*

But what greater evil can there be in a *free* government than the toleration of usages, which are inconsistent with its primary and constituent principles? usages inconsistent in themselves with those principles, but still more so in the *local regulations*, which have

\* See the opinions of MONTESQUIEU, HUME, MILLAR, and HARGRAVE, referred to above, p. 91. note. "The few writers," says Mr. YOUNG, "who have hitherto appeared, in support of the admirable plan for the extinction of the most abominable traffic that ever disgraced mankind, have dwelt much on the ill treatment and cruelty practised in the sugar islands: we do not want to be told of beating out eyes, mashing joints, roasting on spits, baking in iron boxes, and wretches expiring under the lash, for refusing to perform the labour, that was beyond their strength to execute: I have no doubt, but these facts may have been, and probably some of them are the case at present, because there is no such corruptor of the soul, or hardener of the heart, as power." *Annals of Agriculture*, Vol. ix. p. 88.

been made to enforce them.\* It is an express condition annexed to the interior policy of

\* According to the laws of Jamaica printed at London, 1756, the punishment of a Slave, who had been one year in the Plantations, for running away from his owner, and continuing absent for thirty days, is by *cutting off one of the feet of such Slaves*.—In the same laws, a reward of 50*l.* is offered to those who shall *kill* or bring in alive any rebellious slave, that is, any slave, that has been more than three years in the Plantations, who shall have run away, and have continued absent for the space of a twelvemonth.—By the laws of Barbadoes “if any man shall of wantonness, or only of bloody mindedness, or cruel intencion, wilfully kill a Negro, or other Slave of his own, he shall pay into the public Treasury fifteen pounds sterling: but if he shall so kill another man’s, he shall pay to the owner of the Negro double the value, and into the public treasury twenty-five pounds sterling; and he shall further, by the next justice of peace, be bound to his good behaviour during the pleasure of the governor and council, and not be liable to any other punishment or forfeiture for the same.”—The most consummate wickedness, I suppose, says Mr. SHARP, (in his *Representation*, p. 67.) that any body of people, under the specious form of legislature, were ever guilty of. The same act, he adds, contains several other clauses, which are shocking to humanity.—But in justice to the freeholders of Jamaica, he observes that their laws are not near so cruel and inhuman, as the laws of Barbadoes and Virginia, and seem at present to be much more reasonable than they have formerly been, many very oppressive laws being now expired, and others less severe enacted in their room.—In the laws of Barbadoes it is asserted, that “*brutish* Slaves deserve not, for the baseness of their condition, to be tried by a *legal trial* of twelve men of their peers or neighbourhood.” To reduce men to the condition of *brutes* or keep them so, and then reproach them with their degradation,

our Colonies, that they should have “ the  
 “ power of making laws for their own in-  
 “ terior regulation, *not contrary* to the laws  
 “ of England.” \* The colonial laws are  
 too cruel † to bear any comparison with  
 the laws of England. Let us consider  
 merely the *power* of the Master over the  
*service* of his Slave. If it be admitted that  
 a Man *can* bind himself to the *perpetual*  
*service* of another, still the law of England  
 not only prohibits any violent restraint on the  
 liberty of a servant, but it will not permit the  
 servant, in a contract for service, to be sub-  
 ject, even with his own consent, to any  
 Slavish conditions. “ It will not allow him  
 “ to invest the Master with an arbitrary power

tion, and refuse them the rights of Men, because they are in  
 such condition ! It is impossible to find terms adequate to so  
 cruel an insult on human nature.

\* BLACKSTONE'S Commentaries, Introd. p. 109. ed. 1783.

† “ The miserable exiles from Africa are placed for life,  
 “ in subjection to a dominion and system of laws the most mer-  
 “ ciless and tyrannical that ever were tolerated upon the face  
 “ of the Earth : and from all that can be learned by the ac-  
 “ counts of people on the spot, the inordinate authority, which  
 “ the plantation laws confer upon the Slave-holder, is exercised  
 “ by the *English* Slave-holder especially, with rigour and bru-  
 “ tality.” PALEY'S *Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy*,  
 B. III. Part. ii. Ch. 3.

“ of correcting, imprisoning, or alienating  
 “ him ; it will not permit him to renounce  
 “ the capacity of acquiring and enjoying pro-  
 “ perty, or to transmit a contract of service  
 “ to his issue.” † But by the West Indian  
 laws and customs servitude is entailed, the  
 acquisition and enjoyment of private property  
 is restrained ; and personal liberty is violated  
 by alienation, imprisonment, and correction,  
 not only as may be supposed, without the  
 Slave’s consent, but with greater aggravations  
 of the miseries of Slavery, “ than what any  
 “ people in their condition suffer in any other  
 “ part of the world, or have suffered in any  
 “ period of time.” \*

Perhaps it will be said that the Slavery of  
 the Negroes in the West Indies, though con-  
 trary to the *general* principles of the laws of  
 England, has derived a legal sanction from  
 long custom, and from two English Acts of  
 Parliament ; and therefore “ that it is *now*  
 “ lawful, whatever it might be *antecedently*

† HARGRAVE’S Argument, p. 48, 49. ed. 2d.

\* *An Account of the European Settlements in America*, Part 6.  
 Ch. 11th.

with



“to these Statutes.” The words which I have last quoted made the ground of an objection to the prohibition of Slavery in England, as stated by MR. HARGRAVE. The learned Counsel has removed the objection with the same ability, as he has discussed the whole Argument. But, as I have made so much use of his authority to confirm what I thought necessary to bring in proof of the inconsistency of Slavery with the law of England, it would be unfair to conceal that in removing the objection to the prohibition of Slavery in England he admits “the Slavery of “Negroes to be lawful *now* in America, however questionable its *first* introduction there “might be.”\* It is with great diffidence, that I presume to differ on such a subject from such professional authority. Yet I hope to shew that this *incidental* concession will not warrant us to suppose, that it is MR. HARGRAVE’s deliberate and decided opinion, that the Slavery of Negroes in the West Indies is legalized by the Statutes in question. These Statutes are the 5 Geo. 2. (c. 7. s. 4.) “which

† *Argument &c.* p. 67.

“makes

“ makes negroes in America liable to all debts  
 “ simple contract as well as specialty, and the  
 “ statutes regulating the African Trade, par-  
 “ ticularly the 32 Geo. 2. (c. 31.) which in  
 “ the preamble recites, that the trade to Africa  
 “ is advantageous to Great Britain, and ne-  
 “ cessary for supplying it's colonies with ne-  
 “ groes. But the *utmost* which can be said of  
 “ these statutes, is, that they *impliedly* au-  
 “ thorize the Slavery of negroes in America;  
 “ and it would be a strange thing to say, that  
 “ permitting slavery *there*, includes a permis-  
 “ sion of Slavery *here*. By an unhappy con-  
 “ currence of circumstances, the Slavery of  
 “ Negroes is thought to have become neces-  
 “ sary in America; and therefore in America  
 “ our Legislature has permitted the Slavery  
 “ of Negroes.” \*

The authority of the statute 32 Geo. II.  
 is of less consequence, than the former, be-  
 cause the supposed legality of the Slavery of  
 the Negroes inferred from it is not involved  
 in any *act* of legislation. It consists only in

\* MR. HARGRAVE'S *Argument*, ubi supra.

the

the Preamble's reciting " that the Trade to  
 " Africa is advantageous to Great Britain and  
 " necessary for supplying its colonies with  
 " Negroes : " an assertion, which rests on the  
 supposition that Slave labour is necessary to  
 the cultivation of the West Indies, that the  
 stock of Slaves cannot be kept up without  
 constant supplies from Africa, and that the  
 Slave Trade is advantageous to Great Britain.  
 But if it can be made appear, that the Stock  
 of Slaves can be kept up without fresh sup-  
 plies from Africa, that the Slave labour is un-  
 necessary and unprofitable, that the Slave  
 Trade is of no Advantage to the Revenue of  
 this country, nor necessary to the export Trade  
 from it, (and these are circumstances which  
 seem to admit of proof, †) all grounds of  
 the legality of West Indian Slavery *inferred*  
 from this Statute will vanish.

The statute 5 Geo. 2. which treats Slaves as  
 real property, by making them liable to debts,  
 has more the appearance of authorizing  
 Slavery: but how far it really does authorize,  
 we shall better judge by considering the oc-

† See the Postscript.

casion and the terms of the Statute. The Act  
 is entitled, *An Act for the more easy Recovery  
 of Debts in his Majesty's Plantations in Ame-  
 rica*. The Preamble recites,—that “Whereas  
 “his Majesty’s subjects trading to the British  
 “Plantations in America lie under great dif-  
 “ficulties for want of more easy methods of  
 “proving, recovering, and levying of Debts  
 “due to them, than are now used in some of  
 “the said Plantations: and Whereas it will  
 “tend very much to the retrieving of the  
 “Credit formerly given by the trading subjects  
 “of Great Britain to the Natives and Inha-  
 “bitants of the said Plantations, and to the  
 “advancing of the Trade of this Kingdom  
 “thither, if such inconveniences were reme-  
 “died;” &c.—and by the fourth Clause it is  
 enacted: “That from and after the said  
 “twenty ninth day of September one thou-  
 “sand seven hundred and thirty two, the  
 “Houses, Lands, *Negroes*, and other Heri-  
 “ditaments and real estates, situate or being  
 “within the said Plantations belonging to  
 “any person indebted, shall be liable to, and  
 “chargeable with all just Debts, &c.” —

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Long before the passing of this Statute, Negroes had been an article of Commerce in the American Colonies, and ranked as part of the goods and chattels of a Plantation estate. It was therefore necessary for the security of the Merchants in England, and for the support of mutual commerce, that every part of such estate, especially so very material a part as the Negroes, should be liable to debts. But of this Statute, as Mr. HARGRAVE acknowledges, "the *utmost* that can be said, "is that it *impliedly* authorizes the Slavery of "Negroes in America." There was at that time no question before the Legislature about the legality or policy of Slavery in the British Colonies; therefore (as Slavery in the Colonies had not been expressly prohibited, nor the trade in Negroes made contraband,) this Statute, for the sake of the British Merchant, and the support of Colony credit, made the American Planters subject to the contingencies of *their own Customs*. And so far as the general principle goes, that that is right, which the law does not make wrong, the Slavery of Negroes in the British Colonies is authorized

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by a kind of negative legality. But if LIBERTY be the *end* of the British constitution, if our laws are founded on the principles of natural justice, and if every inhabitant of the British dominions be, or ought to be, entitled to the protection of British laws; I think, it must be allowed, that a kind of *negative* legality, collected by *implication* from two or more statutes, (however it may exculpate a Slave-holder or Slave-merchant from the charge of any positive public wrong) cannot legalize, and ought not protect from abolition, customs in the British Colonies, which are totally repugnant to the immunities of civil liberty, and are supported by *local* laws, which are not impliedly, but directly and essentially contrary to the *general* tenour of *British* law.†

The law abhors the principle of Slavery, and has done every thing to provide against its

† It is to be presumed that the act, which was passed last year, to regulate, for a limited time, the shipping and carrying of Slaves, in British vessels, from the coast of Africa, and to continue from Aug. 1, 1788, to Aug. 1, 1789, will not be considered as any sanction to the Trade. The prevailing opinion of the inhuman treatment of the Slaves, during the voyage from Africa, and this temporary provision which originated from it, are neither favourable to the Trade, nor to the Slavery, which encourages and supports it.

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dangerous and destructive consequences. In return for the allegiance, which the law exacts, every British subject is protected in the enjoyment of the absolute rights of personal security, personal liberty, and private property. Protection and allegiance are reciprocal. He cannot be justly amenable to the law, whose injuries the law will not redress. The law therefore cannot tolerate Slavery, which, by placing the Slave under the absolute authority of his master, supposes an exemption from this allegiance. But there is nothing which shews more strikingly, or *implies* more strongly, the injustice and illegality of West Indian Slavery, than the protection which the law affords to a Negro on his arrival in England: by which the master loses all power over the involuntary service of the Slave; and the Slave at once recovers his natural and inherent rights, those rights, "which," says BLACKSTONE, "were formerly the rights of all mankind; but which, in most other countries in the world being now more or less debased and destroyed, at present may be said to remain, in a peculiar and

“ emphatical manner, the rights of the people of England.” \* This acknowledgement of the Negro’s rights in one part of the British dominions, in effect condemns the arbitrary power assumed over him in another.

It deserves to be particularly noticed, in confirmation of this inference from the spirit of our laws, that in the case of JOSEPH KNIGHT, a Negro, which was decided in the chief court in Scotland,† since the case of SOMMERSETT, the want of title in the master to the service of the Negro, in Great Britain, was expressly founded by the court on the *injustice* of the power assumed over the Negro in the West Indies. It was declared, “ That the dominion assumed over  
“ this Negro, under the law of Jamaica, being unjust, could not be supported in this  
“ country to *any* extent: that therefore the  
“ defender had no right to the Negro’s service for *any* space of time; nor to send

† Comm. B. 1. ch. 1. p. 129. ed. 1783.

\* 15th January, 1778.

“ him



" him out of the country against his con-  
 " sent."—" This decision is the more wor-  
 " thy of attention," says Mr. MILLAR, †  
 " as it condemns the Slavery of the Negroes  
 " in explicit terms; and, being the first opi-  
 " nion of that nature delivered by any court  
 " in the island, may be accounted an au-  
 " thentic testimony of the liberal sentiments  
 " entertained in the latter part of the eigh-  
 " teenth century."

Whatever then may be said to justify the  
 permission of Slavery in the colonies of other  
 governments less free than our own, to per-  
 mit it in the British colonies is an inconsist-  
 ency which degrades our high pretensions to  
 political freedom, and discredits the fairest  
 form of liberty, which the world ever saw;  
 a form of liberty which combines those pro-  
 perties of political perfection, which the  
 wisest politicians of antiquity saw in con-  
 templation only, and considered, like the  
 painter's ideal beauty, as objects rather of  
 the imagination than of the senses, rather

† *Origin of the Distinction of Ranks*, p. 361.

to be admired, and envied, than to be expected in any one form of civil government. The whole civil history of mankind does not present a more interesting subject, than the progress of our constitution from the imperfect rudiments of German liberty down to that GREAT EVENT in the last century, which in the fullest and most definite manner established the liberties of this country. When we consider therefore the situation, which our constitution now holds in the progress of political society, how much advanced beyond the other governments of Europe, who does not, in proportion as he values his own happiness, and feels for the honour of his country, regret, that such a political evil should be suffered to exist in any part of a free Christian government, as Slavery? and such a system of Slavery, as by the immense supplies of men, which it draws annually from Africa, encourages war and destruction among the savage nations of Africa,† extends the miseries of Slavery over a

† BOSMAN, who resided for many years on the African coast, says that the Slave traffic is very profitable to the Negro princes,

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whole continent,\* impedes the progress of civilization,† and precludes the means of a just and liberal intercourse between Africa and Europe.‡ Who does not deprecate the toleration and continuance of an obstacle, which, so disgracefully to us, obstructs the advancement of the general happiness of mankind?†

princes, from the duties which are paid them for the Slaves which are brought through their governments. See BENEZET's Account of Guinea, p. 95, 96, note; and POSTLETHWAIT's Queries, No. VII. printed below in the Postscript.

\* BARBOT says, "that since the Slave Trade has been used, "all punishments are changed into Slavery; there being an "advantage on such condemnation, they strain for crimes "very hard, in order to get the benefit of selling the criminal.—He says that Slaves are brought down to the Slave "coast from the inland country, upwards of six hundred "miles." See BENEZET, p. 94.

† See POSTLETHWAIT's Queries ix. x.

‡ That we know so little of the interior parts of Africa, must be attributed in great measure to the contracted, as well as inhuman, policy of the Slave Trade, which has prevented the African princes and inhabitants from attending to other sources of an enlarged commercial communication with the Europeans. Every well-wisher to his country, to religion, and science, must join in one wish for the success of the noble and patriotic *Association* lately established for promoting the *Discovery of the interior parts of Africa*.

† "It is a shame to this nation," says Mr. SHARP, (p. 51 of his *Representation*, Lond. 1769.) "and may in "time prove very dangerous to it, that the *British* constitution

"tion

It may perhaps be asked, if Slavery and the Slave Trade be abolished, what shall we gain by the abolition? — We shall act up to

“tion and liberties should be excluded from any part of the  
 “*British dominions*; for without these, the several nations of  
 “East and West Indians, and the mixt people, who live  
 “therein, cannot have so true an interest in the *British go-*  
 “*vernment*, as to engage their fidelity to it. Besides, it is  
 “the grossest infringement on the *King's Prerogative*, that  
 “*the influence, benefit, and protection of the King's laws and*  
 “*courts of justice*,” should not be extended “*to all his Ma-*  
 “*jefty's subjects*” of every denomination (Slaves as well as  
 “others) even in the remotest parts of the *British empire*.”  
 —“It were better for the English nation, that these Ameri-  
 “can colonies had never existed, or even that they should  
 “have been sunk into the sea, than that the kingdom of  
 “Great Britain should be loaded with the horrid guilt  
 “of tolerating such abominable wickedness, [as the colo-  
 “nial Slavery.] In short, if the King's prerogative is not  
 “speedily exerted for the relief of his Majesty's oppressed and  
 “much injured subjects in the British colonies, (because to  
 “relieve the subject from the oppression of petty tyrants, is the  
 “principal use of the Royal prerogative, as well as the princi-  
 “pal and most natural means of maintaining the same) and for  
 “the extension of the British constitution to the most distant  
 “colonies, whether in the East or West Indies, it must ine-  
 “vitably be allowed, that great share of this enormous guilt  
 “will certainly rest on this side of the water.” p. 73.

With Mr. SHARP's sentiments the reader will not be dis-  
 pleased to compare Dr. PRIESTLEY's opinion. In his excel-  
 lent



the dictates of our nature, and to the benevolent injunctions of our religion; we shall shew our gratitude to Providence for the national blessings, which we possess; and recover the consistency of our national character; that is, we shall do, what is incumbent

lent discourse before mentioned, he says, (p. 9.) "Considering how long this abominable traffic has subsisted, surely, my brethren, it is high time to put an end to it. Hitherto the nation in general has been but little apprized of the enormity and extent of this evil; and those who have been interested in the continuance and extension of it have likewise been interested in concealing the horrid circumstances attending it. Consequently, hitherto, the national guilt has been less than it otherwise would have been in conniving at it. But now that the eyes of the nation in general are in a great measure opened to it, and in the way of being still more so, the national guilt will certainly be more than ever, if immediate stop be not put to a species of iniquity, which calls so loud for the vengeance of Heaven."

Long as this note is already, I trust the reader will not complain of the following addition to it. Mr. PALMER, in his *Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy*, (B. III. Part II. ch. 2. on the subject of *Slavery*) says, "The great revolution, which has taken place in the Western world, may probably conduce, and who knows but it was designed, to accelerate the fall of this abominable tyranny: and now that this contest, and the passions which attend it are no more, there may succeed, perhaps, a season for reflecting, whether a legislature, which had so long lent its assistance to the support of an institution replete with human misery, was fit to be trusted with an empire, the most extensive that ever obtained in any age or quarter of the world."

Q. will be necessary to see what foundation there

on us as Men, as Christians, and as English-Men. And ought it to be asked, what we shall *gain* by the performance of such duties? But if it be asked,—for *commercial* advantages we may refer to the writings of LONG, HUME, POSTLETHWAIT, SMITH, MILLAR, YOUNG, RAMSAY, and to the information collected by the liberal and strenuous exertions of Mr. CLARKSON: of which authorities I shall give some account in the Postscript.—In a *religious* view the advantages would be great, and probably much greater than can be foreseen.

It must be acknowledged, that the advantages of *religion* and *civilization* depend on the capacity of the Negroes for such improvement. By the advocates of Slavery the Negroes are accused of a natural indolence and want of perception sufficient to preclude them from all improvement of the mind. Before, therefore, we can build at all on the hopes of diffusing amongst them the blessings of Christian knowledge and civilization, it will be necessary to see what foundation there

is

is for such an imputation. But what are the reasons given for the alleged incapacity of the Negroes? They are collected from their appearance and conduct, not in their own country, but in the West Indies, in the lowest state of Slavery. The defect of the imputation is obvious. Aversion to labour is indeed one of the acknowledged characteristics of a savage people: perhaps the greatest cruelty in the Slavery of Negroes, consists in the violation of their nature, which they suffer from the severity of constant toil and task-work, so contrary to their natural feelings and habits.\* But what, at best, can be expected from extorted labour? We know what an

\* In the 6th vol. of Churchill's Collection of Voyages, p. 219, we have the relation of a voyage performed by Captain PHILIPS, in a ship of 450 tons, along the coast of Guinea, for elephants teeth, gold, and Negro Slaves, intended for Barbadoes, in which he says, that they took "seven hundred  
" Slaves on board, the men being all put into irons two and  
" two, shackled together to prevent their mutinying or swim-  
" ming ashore. That the Negroes are so loth to leave their  
" own country, that they often leap out of the canoe, boat,  
" or ship, into the sea, and keep under water till they are  
" drowned, to avoid being taken up, and saved by the boats,  
" which pursue them." BENEZET's *Account of Guinea*, p. 101.

effect even the mild despotism of France has on the industry of its inhabitants: what then must be the effect of that Slavery, which is more oppressive than the worst despotism of the most arbitrary civil government?

We are told that the Negroes exhibit no marks of capacity or docility.— But, even if no instance could be produced of genius or docility in a Negro, of which however striking instances are known, we might reply, that in the West Indian Slavery there are very few opportunities for the developement of intellectual capacity, and a thousand impediments to check and oppress it. It is no new opinion, that Slavery extinguishes the best faculties of the mind. If Slavery repress all exertion even in civilized minds, what effect must it have on the mind of an uncivilized barbarian? Intellectual improvement in any condition demands protection and encouragement. But in what circumstance of West Indian Slavery, the worst species of Slavery, are we to look for encouragement to  
 mental



mental exertion? Their health and strength are sacrificed to the emolument of their masters, by constant and severe exactions of bodily labour. For so far their cruel destiny has sunk them under the power of their oppressors. But their minds are free. The impassive virtue of their minds eludes all the tyranny and compulsion of torture, whips, and chains. Instruction and patient kindness might communicate to them some portion of religious knowledge, which might be profitable to their masters, and eternally useful to themselves: good effects have been seen from some judicious attempts within these few years: but they have no encouragement to submit to *any* exercise, which they are able to decline. The knowledge and arts, which we may be ever so zealous to communicate, what reason have they to think, are not meant to be converted into some engine of oppression, some new device of Slavery, as useful to their masters, and as unprofitable to themselves, as their other thankless labours? How can they credit the sincerity of  
in-

instructions, which inculcate principles of universal benevolence and brotherly kindness totally repugnant to their own experience. To these obstacles must be added their want of leisure for instruction; and to that a still greater difficulty, a physical impediment arising from the confirmed age of the Slaves imported, and the very different habits of life to which they were accustomed in Africa. Transported from habits of indolence to constant labour, from freedom to the lowest state of servitude, and oppressed as their faculties are by the greatest obstacles to improvement, it can be no wonder that the Negro Slaves should carry in their conduct every symptom of stupidity, fullness or apathy.

It appears then that we repress the natural powers of their minds, and then accuse them of not exhibiting any marks of intellectual capacity: we reduce them to, or keep them in a situation the most unfavourable to any exhibition of capacity, and then deny that they

they possess it. The imputation of incapacity, under such circumstances, no disinterested or unprejudiced person would admit; even if proofs of African genius or docility could not be produced. But the poems of PHILLIS WHEATLEY, and the letters of IGNATIUS SANCHE, are singular testimonies that the African mind is susceptible of very superior improvement. Those who doubt the value of these poems or letters, will, perhaps, form a more favourable opinion of the capacity of the African Negro, from the account which NIEBUHR (in his *Voyage en Arabie*) has given of FARHAN, an African Negro by birth, who was governor of *Lobeia*, at the time this celebrated traveller was in Arabia. FARHAN was carried out of his country at an early age into Arabia, and sold to an officer in the court of the Prince of *Yemen*. As he was very young, his master gave him every advantage of education: and must have been well satisfied with his improvements, as he afterwards committed to him the management of his affairs. In this charge

charge he gave such proofs of capacity and fidelity, as attracted the notice, and gained him the favour, of the Prince; and at last elevated him to the government of *Lobeia*: in which situation the Danish traveller was witness to his great political prudence and domestic virtues.† To these instances of African capacity, I am able to add another of a very different kind, on the authority of a learned and much respected physician and philosopher at *Manchester*.\* He says, that Dr. RUSH of *Philadelphia* is preparing for the Philosophical Society of *Manchester*, the history of a Negro Slave in *Mary-land*, of whose extraordinary powers of abstract computation he gives the following account. “ Some gentlemen sent  
 “ for him, on purpose to know the certainty  
 “ of the stories they had heard of him. One  
 “ of them asked him, how many seconds a  
 “ man of 70 years, and some odd months,  
 “ weeks and days, had lived? In a minute

† See Mr. RAMSAY's *Inquiry into the Effects of putting a stop to the African Slave Trade by granting liberty to the Slaves in the British Colonies*, p. 43.

\* Dr. PERCIVAL.

“ and



“ and a half he told the number. The gentleman took up his pen, and after calculating the same sum by means of figures, told him he was wrong, and that the number he had declared was too great.—‘Top, massa,’ said the Slave, ‘you forget the leap years.’—“Upon including the seconds contained in the leap years, their sums were exactly the same.”\*

From such extraordinary efforts of *imagination*, of *moral judgment*, of *political prudence*, and *abstract reasoning*, we may conclude that the God of Nature has not suffered the accidents of *feature* and *colour* to counteract his Providence, or of *place*, to circumscribe his bounty.† Compared with the bulk of mankind in any country, and under any

\* See further particulars of the Maryland Negro in the Postscript.

† I do not mention the inhabitants of *Africa Propria*, including the Carthaginian empire, or of *Egypt*, because, I fear, they cannot be admitted into the account. The *local* circumstances of those countries were very different from the coast of Guinea, or the interior parts of Africa: the Carthaginians too and Egyptians are, I believe, generally allowed not to have been marked with those *personal* distinctions which have been supposed by many to indicate in the Negro a difference of species, and with it an inferiority of intellect.

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circumstances, such instances must be rare: it cannot therefore be expected that many should be produced from the annals of Negro Slavery. However, even under the discouraging circumstances of West Indian Slavery, enough has been done in some endeavours to instruct the Negroes, to shew what might be expected from freedom and early education. Mr. RAMSAY indeed confesses, that his endeavours to instruct his own Slaves, did not correspond with his wishes; but at the same time he makes a distinction which is very material to the present question, between the African born Slaves and the Creoles, the latter of whom, he says, were "particularly sensible and acute." \* The Creole Slaves, who are born in Slavery, and trained from their infancy to the discipline of the whip, and the performance of extorted labour, suffer no violation of early and *natural habits*, feel no desire of revenge for the *loss* of blessings, which they have never known, no

\* *Inquiry into the Effects of putting a stop to the African Slave Trade, &c.* (London, 1784.) p. 7. 9.

rancour for the irresistible indignities to which they are subject, and contract no sullenness or apathy from despair. The difference between the parents and their children shews indisputably, I think, the source of those signs of incapacity, which have been objected to the African Slaves, in the West Indies. But though Mr. RAMSAY's own endeavours were not so effectual, as he wished, yet he candidly acknowledges, that the success of the Moravians has been very considerable.\*

The school for the instruction of Negroe Slaves, established at Philadelphia by the philanthropy of Mr. BENEZET, who devoted the last two years of his life to the personal attendance of it, has afforded, it is said, "some striking proofs of the Negroe children's advancement in learning, which have been transmitted to England."† But

\* See also the Bishop of London's Sermon preached before the Society for the propagation of the Gospel, p. 29. note.

† The memory of ANTHONY BENEZET will ever be revered for his genuine charity and philanthropy. Though the following account of him is taken from the Advertisement prefixed to his *Account of Guinea* lately republished and now very common,

the information, which Mr. RAMSAY, in the inquiry before mentioned, (p. 37, 38.) gives of

I make no apology for transcribing it here with the hopes of contributing to its circulation, and making a name more known, which every one who does not know, will be glad to know.

“ ANTHONY BENEZET was of a respectable family, and was  
 “ born at St. Quintin, in Picardy, in 1713. His father was  
 “ one of the many Protestants, who in consequence of the  
 “ persecutions, which followed the revocation of the edict of  
 “ Nantz, sought an asylum in foreign countries. After a short  
 “ stay in Holland, he settled with his wife and children in  
 “ London, in 1715. Our Author having received a liberal  
 “ education, served an apprenticeship in an eminent mercantile  
 “ house in London. In 1731, the whole family removed to  
 “ Philadelphia. His three brothers followed trade successfully;  
 “ but he, whose pursuits were directed to worthier objects than  
 “ the attainment of wealth, and whose highest gratification  
 “ consisted in promoting the welfare of mankind, chose the  
 “ humble, but useful, occupation of instructing young people  
 “ in the paths of knowledge and virtue. Soon after his arrival  
 “ in America, he joined in profession with the people called  
 “ Quakers. The exertions of that society to annihilate the un-  
 “ christian practise of holding negroes in slavery are well  
 “ known: In these endeavours, it is presumed that no indivi-  
 “ dual took a more active part than this worthy citizen of the  
 “ world. His writings on this subject were numerous: besides  
 “ several smaller tracts, which were generally dispersed, he  
 “ published, in the year 1762, the following Account, of  
 “ which this is the fourth edition; and in 1767, he also pub-  
 “ lished his “ Caution and Warning to Great Britain and her  
 “ Colonies.” With the same benevolent views, he not only  
 “ availed himself of every opportunity of personal application,  
 “ but also corresponded with many persons in Europe, Ameri-

“ ca,



the state of the Negroe Christians in the Portuguese island of St. Thomas under the Line,

“ ca, and the West Indies. Though mean in his personal appearance, such was the courtesey of his manners, and so evident the purity of his intentions, that he had ready access to to people of all descriptions, and obtained the respect of the few whom he failed to influence.

“ About 1759, a considerable number of French families were removed from Acadia to Pennsylvania, on account of some political suspicions. Towards these unfortunate people he manifested his usual philanthropy, and exerted himself much in their behalf; and it was generally to his care that the many contributions, raised to alleviate their distresses, were entrusted. In a country where few understood their language, they were wretched and helpless: circumstances which insured them his cheerful assistance.

“ Apprehending that much advantage would arise, both to the individuals and the public, from instructing the black people in common learning, he zealously promoted the establishment of a school in Philadelphia for that purpose. His endeavours were successful, and a school for negroes was instituted, and has been supported ever since, principally by the religious society of which he was a member; in which however they have been liberally assisted by well-disposed persons of other denominations. The two last years of his life he devoted to a personal attendance of this school, being earnestly desirous that the black people might be better qualified for the enjoyment of that freedom to which great numbers of them had then been restored. To this, which he conceived to be a religious duty, he sacrificed the superior emoluments of his former school, and his bodily ease, although the weakness of his constitution seemed to demand indulgence. By his last will he directed, that after the decease of his widow, his whole little fortune (the savings of fifty years industry) should, except a few small legacies, be applied

seems to be the most important of any, which the public is yet in possession of. He says, upon the authority of an intelligent sea officer, " that there are upwards of 15,000 " Negroe Christians in the island, instructed " to read and write, who daily attend divine " worship, clean and well clad. Friars of " all orders, and priests of every denomina- " tion, are chosen from among them, and " are instructed in divine worship, and the " Christian rites.—Why might not this is- " land," says Mr. RAMSAY, " send out in " time, Negroe teachers and artists to in- " struct and improve their brethren on the " Continent?"—May we not add, that if Creoles were early instructed in the principles of the Christian religion, under the encouragement of freedom and protection, why might not they contribute their share to- wards civilizing the natives of Africa? There are many reasons, which not only make the

" applied to the support of this Negroe school, which had been " so much indebted to his care and benevolence: some striking " proofs of the Negroe-children's advancement in learning in " this school have lately been transmitted to England,

attempt

attempt desirable, but the prospect of success very probable. The diffusion of Christianity, and consequently of the true knowledge of God, with just principles of social and civil duty, is desirable chiefly on account of the first great object which should be had in view, the recovery of thousands from the grossest errors of idolatry. All attempts, at present, to inculcate amongst them the religion of Christ, must be vain, while West Indian Slavery, through the Slave Trade, continues the occasion of perpetual hostilities amongst them, and encourages practices in the highest degree repugnant to the doctrines of Christianity. I do not know that Missionaries have ever attempted to proselyte the inhabitants of Africa: perhaps they have been deterred, under present circumstances, by the great improbability of success. But let a different kind of intercourse be established between Africa and Europe, and a million of Negroe Christians would have many advantages, which no other mission could have. The natives of Africa would have an instinctive confidence

dence in Christians of their own race : and these instructors would probably communicate their lessons in a manner, that would harmonize better with the perceptions of an African mind, than the instructions of any European teacher.

The diffusion of Christianity would open the way to a great increase of commerce between Africa and Europe, and add largely to the stock of general knowledge, by establishing the means of a free and friendly intercourse with the African nations, and of removing the reproach which has fallen on the present age, (inquisitive and liberal as it is,) for suffering so great a portion of the world to continue neglected or unknown. † Slaves have been so long an article of commerce, from which the African princes have derived very considerable revenues, that if Slavery and the Slave

† Africa was circumnavigated, as is well known, in an enterprize undertaken by the orders of NECHOS, King of Egypt, as early as the beginning of the sixth century before Christ. See GOGUET'S *Origin of Laws, Arts, and Sciences*, Vol. III. p. 137. of the English Translation.



Trade were abolished, and there was no longer a market for Slaves, they would be under the necessity of opening some new sources of revenue to supply the deficiency. This necessity would introduce other articles of commerce, and lead to the cultivation of arts at present unknown to them, which, while it enlightened their minds, would shew them the advantages of an extended commerce with Europe ; and by degrees lay open the vast *continent* of Africa to the same spirit of adventure,† which has within these few years made so many important discoveries by *sea*.

When these circumstances are considered, it will not, I think, be asked what good we shall gain from the abolition of Slavery and the Slave Trade, that is from a measure, which is *injoined* by many positive *duties*, natural, religious, and political ; and *encou-*

† In this view the abolition of Slavery and the Slave Trade becomes an object highly interesting to the noble and patriotic *Association* (before mentioned) established for promoting the discovery of the interior parts of Africa. See an account of their proceedings, in YOUNG'S *Annals of Agriculture and other useful Arts*, Vol. xi. No. 61. p. 13.

raged by many certain *advantages*, which we have the best authorities † to believe, must accrue—and many probable advantages, of the greatest consequence, which, there is every reason to think, would accrue—to national commerce, and the stock of general knowledge.

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If West Indian Slavery be so repugnant to all the laws of God, of nature, and our country, as I have endeavoured to represent it; and if the abolition of it be susceptible of the advantages, which I have stated, no British subject can be exempt from the duty of doing every thing in his power towards preventing the continuance of so great a political as well as moral evil : ‡ more especial-

† See the Postscript.

‡ “ Both the guilt of the oppressor, and the misery of the oppressed, will be equally laid at our door. This guilt will lie the heaviest, no doubt, upon ministers of state, and all those who have the greatest influence in public measures; but a due proportion of it will be imputed to all those, who do not exert whatever influence they may have to prevent it; which includes all who do not petition and remonstrate on the subject. For so much is what every man may do. This is the least we can do to wash our hands, and assert our innocence.” Dr. PRIESTLEY’s, *Sermon on the Slave Trade*, p. 13.

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ly, as it should seem, not those subjects, " whose business it is to teach what it is " every man's concern to know ; " not the interpreters of God's word, which is so flagrantly violated by West Indian Slavery and its consequences. To this reflection I have been unavoidably led by the objections, which have been sometimes made, on the present occasion, to any *interference* of the clergy in civil matters : because many of the clergy have exerted themselves in pressing upon the nation the duty and necessity of abolishing Slavery and the Slave Trade. Though the magnitude of the evil complained of, as well as of its extensive and complicated effects, will best justify the clergy from an unmerited objection ; yet I cannot conclude these considerations without adding a few words on the subject. Among other grounds of objection, it is said, that " our Saviour and his Apostles never inter-  
 " meddled with the question of Slavery,  
 " though Slavery prevailed much more in  
 " their time, than now." In answer to this, it must be observed, in the first place, that

there was no *question* at that time about the legality of Slavery. For though the Romans acknowledged, that a state of Slavery was contrary to nature, yet the exigencies of their military government rendered the employment of Slaves necessary to carry on most of the subordinate occupations of life. In the next place, considering the universal prevalence of Slavery in those times, any direct opposition to it by the Apostles, would not only have defeated the immediate object, but would have been very unfavourable to their mission. They were sent to preach a new religion amongst the Gentiles, repugnant to all other religions then existing. This was in itself a sufficient obstacle to the progress of their doctrines. They did not therefore inculcate any innovations of civil policy, such as the abolition of Slavery would then have been, but on the contrary preached peace and obedience to the ruling powers, without exception to the justice of their government. Yet this abolition was at length effectually produced by the spirit of the religion, which they



they preached, and the gradual operation of its benevolent precepts.

The present circumstances of this country do not at all correspond with that period of the Roman Government. The legality and expediency of Slavery is become a great question, a subject of national Inquiry, in which every friend to his Religion and his Country is interested. Slavery is not, as it was with them, interwoven with our civil policy; but has been long banished from England, as dangerous to the community, and confined to its commercial dependencies. The abolition therefore of these last but worst remains of Slavery, would not produce any innovations of civil policy, but would eradicate from the British empire an evil, which is incompatible with its genius. The appeal, which has been made to the Legislature, does not come from a conquered province, such as Judea was to Rome, but is supported by the largest and most opulent commercial bodies in the Sovereign state. If the Clergy have exerted their endeavours to excite the attention of the public to the moral turpitude,  
and

and commercial impolicy of Slavery, and to second the appeals of disinterested humanity, by inculcating the duty and necessity of abolishing it, they are only renewing the energy of those Christian principles, which in less enlightened days than the present, produced its abolition.

Instead therefore of wishing to restrain the exertions of any order of men, or individuals, in this cause of human nature, let us rather of all ranks, professions, and persuasions, unite — in the name of the *common Father* of mankind, in the name of Him, who died to save us *all*, in the name of *Faith*, of *Charity* and *Liberty*, — to implore those, who have the power, to extirpate a system of cruelty and oppression, which has so long been suffered to exist to the dishonour of human nature, the discredit of a Christian nation, of a generous and enlightened people, and the disgrace of a free Constitution.

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I have now, Sir, completed the design of this letter, in which, as You perceive, it has been

been my chief object to shew the necessity of abolishing SLAVERY in the *British* Colonies, not only from its inconsistency with *the will of God*, because contrary to the natural and absolute rights of mankind, and the spirit of the Christian Religion ; but from its inconsistency with *the general tenour of the British Laws and Constitution*. Upon this inconsistency of Slavery with the nature of our Government, the question respecting the Abolition of the *Slave Trade*, appears to me, I hope I may say it without presumption, to rest chiefly as a subject for the deliberation of a *British* legislature. Whether the Slave Trade be beneficial to the commerce of the nation and the public revenue, or not, whether all the cruelties imputed to the Slave Trade and Slavery can or cannot be substantiated, whether the cruelties complained of can be mitigated or not, the very existence of *Slavery*, as long as it is permitted, must be a heavy reproach to *this* Country, and a discredit to the age, which can tolerate in *any* part of the *British* Empire, what the humanity of our ancient

Lawyers

Lawyers so uniformly, and, to their immortal honour, so successfully laboured to abolish in this Island.

I am,

Yours, &c.

T. BURGESS.

C. C. C. Feb. 1789.

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## POSTSCRIPT.

**B**EFORE I give the authorities above referred to concerning the commercial disadvantages of Slave labour, and the Slave Trade, and the commercial advantages which would follow from the abolition of the whole Slave System, I shall supply some additional particulars of the Maryland Negro, which I owe to the friendly communication of Dr. PERCIVAL, who received them from Dr. RUSH. "Of their authenticity, says Dr. PERCIVAL, "I have no doubt, as I know Dr. RUSH to be a "man of observation and probity; and we have "now a gentleman in Manchester, who has seen "and conversed with the Slave, and who confirms "the account, which has been given of him. The "Slave is now living, is about 70 years of Age, "of the name of THOMAS FULLER, the property "of Mrs. ELIZ. Cox, who lives about four miles "from Alexandria in the state of Virginia. Two

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"citizens

“ citizens of Philadelphia viz. W. HARTSHORN,  
“ and S. COATES, both gentlemen of probity and  
“ respectable character, having heard, in travelling  
“ through the neighbourhood, in which this Slave  
“ lives, of his extraordinary powers in Arithmetic,  
“ sent for him, and found their curiosity gratified  
“ by his Answers to the following questions.

1. “ Upon being asked how many seconds there  
“ are in a year and a half, he answered in about  
“ two minutes, 47,304,000.

2. “ Upon being asked how many seconds a man  
“ has lived who is 70 years of age, 17 days and  
“ twelve hours old, he answered in a minute and a  
“ half. 2,205,032,000. &c. (*See above Page 132.*)

3. “ Upon being asked, Suppose a farmer has  
“ six fows, and each sow has six female pigs the  
“ first year, and they all increase in the same pro-  
“ portion to the end of 8 years, how many fows  
“ will the farmer then have? In ten minutes he  
“ answered, 34, 588, 806.

“ In the presence of F. WISTER and B. W.  
“ MORRIS, two other respectable citizens of Phi-  
“ ladelphia, he gave the amount, in a few minutes,  
“ of nine figures multiplied by nine.”

The Author of *Considerations on the Emancipation of Negroes &c.* is allowed the credit of having produced the most reasonable Apology for West Indian Slavery and the African Slave Trade, that has appeared. But plausibly as he argues the subject, it is impossible not to perceive, that he reasons against the conviction of his feelings. The benevolent considerations and liberal concessions, which even in spite of the subject, sometimes break thro' this defence of Slavery, shew how little such a practise will bear the test of serious reflexion. Indeed the Author acknowledges, that "if the question be put nakedly, whether Slavery be an evil, and if it be not just to prevent negroes from being enslaved? there is not a West Indian Planter on the other side of the water, who from the evidence of his own feelings, would not answer in the affirmative. But surely this is not the way, in which questions involving so many considerations ought to be put. — Persons in the ardour of their enthusiasm may exclaim, perish all considerations, which are incompatible with justice and morality! But this will by no means serve the purpose of the politician, (of whom alone we are here speaking,) to whom it is not always permitted to square his conduct by the exact theory of moral rectitude. Public utility is his principle; and it is upon that principle, that government as well as justice itself is founded."

This doctrine is very strongly reprobated by the great Roman statesman in the third book of his Offices, and was unanimously condemned, on a very trying occasion, by the whole body of the Athenian people in the better days of their republic.\* If West Indian Slavery and the African Slave Trade were measures now only in project, and waited the approbation of the British legislature, there can not be a doubt, I think, that both Slavery and the Slave Trade would be rejected as unanimously as the proposal of Themistocles was by the Athenians, and with as much abhorrence as the attempt to introduce Slavery into England was in the time of Ed. VI. But as present interests have often more weight than past examples, I shall endeavour to confirm the judgement of Cicero and the Athenian people, by the opinions of some of our greatest political

\* Themistocles post victoriam ejus belli, quod cum Persis fuit, dixit in concione, se habere consilium reipublicæ salutare, sed id sciri opus non esse. Postulavit, ut aliquem populus daret, quicum communicaret. Datus est Aristides. Huic ille, classem Lacedæmoniorum, quæ subducta esset ad Gytheum, clam incendi posse: quo facto frangi Lacedæmoniorum opes necesse esset. Quod Aristides cum audisset, in concionem magna expectatione venit, dixitque perutile esse consilium, quod Themistocles afferret, sed minime honestum. Itaque Athenienses, quod honestum non esset, id ne utile quidem putaverunt, totamque eam rem, quam ne audierant quidem, auctore Aristide, repudiaverunt. CICERO de Off. L. III. c. II. VALERIUS MAXIMUS (L. VI. c. 5.) says, E vestigio universa concio, quod æquum non videretur, id ne expedire quidem proclamavit.

writers,



writers, and to shew from them that what, is allowed by the Advocates of Slavery and the Slave Trade, to be inconsistent with moral rectitude and justice, is at the same time inconsistent with public utility, even in a commercial view. The authorities which I shall produce, tend to prove (1) that the *labour of Slaves* is less profitable than the labour of freemen; (2) that even if Slave labour were advantageous or necessary, the *Slave Trade* is unnecessary; (3) that the profits of the Slave Trade are too precarious to be generally beneficial to individuals; (4) that it is of no advantage to the public revenue; (5) that it is injurious to the naval power of Great Britain; (6) that it is injurious to its general commercial interests.

1. " It was found, says Mr. LONG, that one  
 " plough used on an estate in the parish of Clarendon, turned up as much ground in one day, and  
 " in a much better manner, than one hundred negroes could perform with their hoes in the same  
 " time." ‡

Mr. HUME says, that " Columella advises the  
 " Master to give a reward, and even liberty to a  
 " female slave, that had reared him above three

‡ LONG's *History of Jamaica*, Vol. 9. p. 459. See Mr. CLARKSON's *Essay on the Impolicy of the Slave Trade*. p. 111.

" children;

“ children : † a proof that sometimes the ancients  
 “ propagated from their slaves; which indeed can-  
 “ not be denied. Were it otherwise, the practise  
 “ of Slavery, being so common in antiquity must  
 “ have been destructive to a degree, which no ex-  
 “ pedient could repair. All I pretend to infer from  
 “ these reasonings, is, that *Slavery* is in general dis-  
 “ advantageous both to the happiness and popu-  
 “ lousness of Mankind, and that *its place is much*  
 “ *better supplied by the practise of hired servants.*” \*

For Mr. POSTLETHWAIT's opinion, see the *Que-  
 ries* at the end of this Postscript.

The experience of all ages and nations, says Dr.  
 SMITH, “ demonstrates that the work done by  
 “ slaves, though it appears to cost only their main-  
 “ tenance is in the end the dearest of any. A per-  
 “ son, who can acquire no property, can have no  
 “ other interest but to eat as much and labour as  
 “ little as possible. Whatever he does beyond  
 “ what is sufficient to purchase his own mainte-  
 “ nance, can be squeezed out of him by violence  
 “ only, and not by any interest of his own.” †

† The laws of West Indian Slavery, on the contrary, dis-  
 courage the natural increase of their Slaves, as may be seen in  
 some extracts from the West India laws, quoted by Mr. SHARP, in  
 his *Representation*, p. 55. This is consistent with what has been  
 before mentioned (p. 84.) on the authority of Mr. RAMSAY, as  
 the prevailing policy of the West Indies, that it is better to  
 buy than to breed Slaves.

\* *Essays* Vol. 1. p. 413.

† *On the Wealth of Nations*, Vol. 11. p. 88.

“ Though

" Though the wear and tear of a free servant be  
 " equally at the expense of his Master, it generally  
 " costs him much less than that of a Slave. The  
 " fund destined for replacing or repairing, if I may  
 " say so, the wear and tear of a Slave, is commonly  
 " managed by a negligent Master or careless over-  
 " seer. That destined for the same office with re-  
 " gard to a free Man, is managed by the free man  
 " himself. The disorders which generally prevail  
 " in the œconomy of the rich, naturally introduce  
 " themselves into the management of the former.  
 " The strict frugality and parsimonious attention of  
 " the poor as naturally establish themselves in that  
 " of the latter. Under such different management,  
 " the same purpose must require very different de-  
 " grees of expense to execute it. It appears accor-  
 " dingly, from the experience of all ages and na-  
 " tions, I believe, that the work done by freemen  
 " comes cheaper in the end than that performed  
 " by slaves. It is found to do so even at Boston, New  
 " York, and Philadelphia, where the wages of  
 " common labour are so very high." \*

Mr. MILLAR says, " there is reason to believe  
 " that the institution of Slavery is the chief circum-  
 " stance that has prevented (in the West Indies)  
 " those contrivances to shorten and facilitate the

\* *On the Wealth of Nations*, Vol. i. p. 122.

" more

“ more laborious employments of the people,  
 “ which take place in other countries, where free-  
 “ dom has been introduced. Notwithstanding the  
 “ connexion between our colonies and the mother-  
 “ country, the instruments proper for some of the  
 “ most common branches of labour are little known  
 “ in many parts of the West Indies. In Jamaica  
 “ the digging of a grave gives full employment to  
 “ two men for a whole day; as from the want of  
 “ proper tools it is necessary to make a large hole  
 “ no way adapted to the human figure. I am in-  
 “ formed, that, unless it has been procured very  
 “ lately, there is hardly a spade in the whole island.  
 “ In procuring firewood for boiling sugar, &c. a  
 “ work that takes up about five or six weeks yearly,  
 “ no use is made of the saw, but the trees are cut  
 “ with an ax into logs of about 30 inches in length.  
 “ Instead of a flail the negroes make use of a single  
 “ stick in threshing the Guinea-corn; so that in  
 “ this and in winnowing, ten women are capable  
 “ of doing no more work in a day, than, with our  
 “ instruments and machinery, two men would per-  
 “ form in two hour. From the want of a scythe  
 “ or sickle, they are obliged every night to cut  
 “ with a knife, or pull with their hands, a quantity  
 “ of grass sufficient to serve their horses, mules,  
 “ and black cattle. § With regard to the planting

§ These observations were made about 1765, and relate  
 more immediately to the parishes of Vere, Hanover, and St.  
 Thomas in the vale.

“ of



“ of sugar, experiments have been made, in some  
 “ of the islands, from which it appears that, in  
 “ this species of cultivation, cattle might be em-  
 “ ployed with advantage, and that the number of  
 “ slaves might be greatly diminished \*. But these  
 “ experiments have been little regarded, in oppo-  
 “ sition to the former usage, and in opposition  
 “ to a lucrative branch of trade which this inno-  
 “ vation would in a great measure destroy.” †

Mr. YOUNG says, that “ all calculations of West  
 “ India labour by Slaves prove, that the product  
 “ raised by Slaves is absolutely contemptible on  
 “ comparison with that of free hands in England.

“ Reckoning horses as well as labourers upon  
 “ an English farm, the total product will be found  
 “ per animal, (horse and Man,) much more than  
 “ double the West-Indian product per negroe; ap-  
 “ parently a decisive proof of the extreme defi-  
 “ ciency in the labour of Slaves, and sufficient to  
 “ shew that there can hardly be any rate supposed  
 “ of free labour, which would not be cheaper than  
 “ that of African slaves.” †

But if Slave labour be so disadvantageous, it is  
 an obvious question, how happens it that the West

\* See American husbandry, published in 1775.

† On the Origin of the Distinction of Ranks, p. 357.

† YOUNG's *Annals of Agriculture*, Vol. IX. N<sup>o</sup>. 49. p. 94-95.

India planters have continued so long blind to their own interests. Dr. SMITH offers the following reasons: " If great improvements are seldom to be  
 " expected from great Proprietors, they are least  
 " of all to be expected, when they employ Slaves  
 " for their workmen. — The pride of Man makes  
 " him love to domineer, and nothing mortifies  
 " him so much as to be obliged to condescend to  
 " persuade his inferiors. Wherever the law allows  
 " it, and the work can afford it, therefore, he will  
 " generally prefer the service of Slaves to that of  
 " freemen. The planting of Sugar and tobacco  
 " can afford the expense of Slave cultivation. The  
 " raising of corn, it seems, in the present times,  
 " cannot. In the English Colonies, of which the  
 " principal produce is corn, the far greater part of  
 " the work is done by freemen. — In our sugar  
 " Colonies on the contrary the whole work is done  
 " by Slaves, and in our tobacco colonies a very  
 " great part of it. The profits of a sugar planta-  
 " tion in any of our West Indian Colonies are ge-  
 " nerally much greater than those of any other  
 " cultivation that is known either in Europe or  
 " America: and the profits of a tobacco planta-  
 " tion are superior to those of Corn, as has already  
 " been observed. Both can afford the expence of  
 " Slave cultivation, but sugar can afford it still  
 " better than tobacco. The Number of Negroes  
 " accordingly is much, greater in proportion to  
 " that

“ that of whites, in our Sugar than in our tobacco Colonies.” \*

2. But even if the labour of Slaves were cheaper than that of freemen, and Slave cultivation were necessary to the sugar Colonies, the *Slave Trade* is not necessary, because the Stock of Slaves on every Plantation may be kept up without fresh importations from Africa. It appears that during the late War the Slave Trade was almost annihilated; and yet by a different treatment of the Slaves the subsisting number was equal to the necessary labour of the Plantations. ‡ To what has been mentioned above p. 65, (note), may be added the information contained in the Conclusion to the Preface of Dr. PRIESTLEY's *Sermon on the Slave Trade*, “ that one “ Planter, who employs a very great number of “ Slaves, has had no occasion to purchase any “ fresh ones these twenty years.”

\* *On the Wealth of Nations*, Vol. II. p. 88. 89.

‡ *Clarkson's Essay on the Impolicy of the Slave Trade*, p. 129. In the year 1772 sailed from the different parts of Great Britain for the coast of Africa, 175 Vessels; in 1779 the number of such Vessels amounted to no more than 28. Yet the Sugar Trade of this Country, and, of course, the revenue derived from that Trade, were very little affected. For in the year 1772 was imported into England 1, 766, 422 Cwt. of Sugar: in 1779, was imported 1, 441, 943. The variations between the two years 1772 and 1779 may be seen in Mr. CLARKSON's Essay.

3. The Slave Trade is not only unnecessary to keep up the Stock of Slaves in the West Indian Colonies, but the profits of the Trade are too precarious to be a general concern to this country. From the best information that has been collected it appears, that though great fortunes have been gained by Slave Merchants, and, if it were to be continued, would probably still be gained, yet the Slave Trade has been among all nations, and is still at the present moment, unprofitable in the aggregate. The great African company in England, who had considerable advantages, failed several times. The Danish failed last year. Out of 13 French Companies, established at Senegal, 12 have failed, and the 13th. it is expected, will soon follow the fate of the others.

5. To the general commercial interests of Great Britain, it must be highly injurious by preventing the establishment of more beneficial branches of commerce.

4. It is of no advantage to the revenue; as the bounties and drawbacks on this Trade very much exceed any Duties, that arise from the goods sent into it, as appears from the statements given by Mr. CLARKSON, in his *Essay on the Impolicy &c.* p. 107, &c.

6. To the naval interests of this country it appears to be very detrimental by the destruction of the Seamen, of whom it is said to destroy more in one year



year than all the other Trades in Great Britain destroy in two. See CLARKSON, p. 53, &c.

For a solution of the principal *commercial* difficulties, which appear to be against the abolition of Slavery and the Slave Trade, see the Introduction to Mr. RAMSAY'S *Objections and Answers*: and Mr. GREGORY'S *Essays*, p. 389, &c.

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As Mr. CLARKSON has gone more fully into the subject of the Impolicy of the Slave Trade than any other writer, I shall give the general result of his Inquiries, as it is summed up by himself at the Conclusion of his Essay.

“ It has appeared, that the Slave Trade, considered abstractedly by itself, is of *no emolument to the nation*; that it is *unprofitable*, on the whole, *to individuals*; and that it is the *grave of our seamen*, destroying more of them in one year, than all the other trades of Great Britain, when put together, destroy in two.

“ It has appeared, on the other hand, that the trade which might be substituted for it in the natural productions of Africa, if considered in the same light, would, by affording an inexhaustible mine of wealth to our dyers and artificers in wood, by enabling us to break the monopoly of the Dutch in spices, by repaying us for the loss of America, and by becoming the cheapest market  
“ for

“ for all sorts of raw materials for our manufactu-  
“ rers, be of *great national advantage*.

“ It has appeared, secondly, that such a trade  
“ would be highly *profitable to individuals*.

“ Thirdly, that it would be a *nursery for our sea-*  
“ *men*, not only to cherish and preserve them, but  
“ to return them in health and vigour, in case of  
“ an emergency, in a few weeks.

“ Fourthly, that it could not possibly *interfere*  
“ with the productions of our *present colonies*.

“ This is the first statement that may be collected  
“ from a perusal of the present work.

To proceed. “ It has appeared also, that, if the  
“ slave trade were abolished, such an abolition  
“ could not be productive of any immediate detri-  
“ ment, but would be attended with *future gain*.

“ First the planter would be relieved from a con-  
“ tinual source of embarrassment and distress; his  
“ property would be increased, his annual returns  
“ would be larger, he would feel himself in an in-  
“ dependent situation, in point of subsistence, both  
“ in peace and war, and he would have the un-  
“ speakable satisfaction of going to his bed fearless  
“ of any private machinations, and in full confi-  
“ dence that his property, as well as his person,  
“ would be secure.

“ Secondly, his slaves, necessarily experiencing,  
“ on one hand, a diminution of their former ri-  
“ gours, and raised, by certain regulations, to po-  
“ sitive

“ sitive advantages on the other, they would be  
 “ admitted to a considerable portion of happiness,  
 “ and their condition be considerably improved.

“ Thirdly, the islands would be safe in the time  
 “ of war.

“ Fourthly, new sources would be opened for  
 “ the improvement of the revenue.

“ Fifthly, new sources would be opened for the  
 “ consumption of our manufactures.

“ This is the second statement that may be col-  
 “ lected from the present work ; and I think it is  
 “ evident, upon a mature consideration of both,  
 “ unless a person wilfully shuts his eyes, that the  
 “ slave trade is (as I undertook to shew in the in-  
 “ troductory chapter) as *impolitick as it is inhuman*  
 “ *and unjust*. For when we consider that this trade,  
 “ by destroying our marine, is not only a *political*  
 “ *evil* in itself, but that it *binds the introduction of*  
 “ *one*, to which if it were compared in point of in-  
 “ dividual or national emolument, it would be like  
 “ an island to a continent, or a river to a sea ; and  
 “ that it *prevents the existence* of those important ad-  
 “ vantages both to the colonies and this kingdom  
 “ that have been described above ; we may safely  
 “ say, that whatever arguments the *moralist* is able  
 “ to collect from the light of reason, or the *man*  
 “ *of humanity* from his feelings, the statesman is  
 “ able to collect others from the source of *policy*,  
 “ that call equally aloud for its ABOLITION.

QUERIES

**QUERIES** proposed, in the **Universal Dictionary of Trade and Commerce**, by **MALACHY POSTLETHWAIT**, who was a Member of the **African Company**. (*Vide*, **English African Company**.)

I. Whether so extensive and populous a country as Africa is, will not admit of a far more extensive and profitable trade to Great Britain, than it yet ever has done?

II. Whether the people of this country, notwithstanding their colour, are not capable of being civilized, as well as great numbers of the Indians in America and Asia have been? and whether the primitive inhabitants of all countries, so far as we have been able to trace them, were not once as savage and inhumanized as the Negroes of Africa? and whether the ancient Britons themselves, of this our own country, were not once upon a level with the Africans?

III. Whether, therefore, there is not a probability that this people might, in time, by proper management in the Europeans, become as wise, as industrious, as ingenious, and as humane, as the people of any other country has done?

IV. Whether their rational faculties are not, in the general, equal to those of any other of the human species; and whether they are not, from experience, as capable of mechanical and manufactural arts and trades, as even the bulk of the Europeans?

V. Whether



V. Whether it would not be more to the interest of all the European nations concerned in the trade to Africa, rather to endeavour to cultivate a friendly, humane, and civilized commerce with those people, into the very center of their extended country, than to content themselves only with skimming a trifling portion of trade upon the sea coast of Africa?

VI. Whether the greatest hindrance and obstruction to the Europeans cultivating a humane and Christian-like commerce with those populous countries, has not wholly proceeded from that unjust, inhumane, and unchristian-like traffic, called the *Slave Trade*, which is carried on by the Europeans?

VII. Whether this trade, and this only, was not the primary cause, and still continues to be the chief cause, of those eternal and incessant broils, quarrels, and animosities, which subsist between the Negroe princes and chiefs; and consequently those eternal wars which subsist among them, and which they are induced to carry on, in order to make prisoners of one another, for the sake of the *Slave Trade*?

VIII. Whether, if trade was carried on with them for a series of years, as it has been with most other savage countries, and the Europeans gave no encouragement whatever to the *Slave Trade*, those cruel wars among the blacks would not cease, and a fair and honourable commerce in time take place throughout the whole country?

X

IX. Whether

IX. Whether the example of the Dutch in the East Indies, who have civilized innumerable of the natives, and brought them to the European way of cloathing, &c. does not give reasonable hopes that these suggestions are not visionary, but founded on experience, as well as on humane and Christian-like principles ?

X. Whether commerce in general has not proved the great means of civilizing all nations, even the most savage and brutal; and why not the Africans?

XI. Whether the territories of those European nations, that are interested in the colonies and plantations in America, are not populous enough, or may not be rendered so, by proper encouragement given to matrimony, and to the breed of foundling infants, to supply their respective colonies with labourers in the place of Negroe slaves?

XII. Whether the British dominions in general have not an extent of territory sufficient to increase and multiply their inhabitants; and whether it is not their own fault that they do not increase them sufficiently to supply their colonies and plantations with whites instead of blacks?



E R R A T A.

- P. 9. l. 17. read repair  
10. l. 10. — and general  
28. l. 5. — maintain  
41. l. 14. — practice  
— l. 21. — incongruity  
45. l. 20. — Metaphysicians  
52. l. 6. — philanthropy  
62. l. 10. — stronger  
79. l. 12. — can read  
81. l. 16. — miseries  
85. l. 1. *Omitted in the note, Mr. Ramsay's Ob-  
jections and Answers, &c. p. 13.*  
91. l. 4. — probandi  
101. l. 7. — West Indian  
118. l. 12. — to protect

